

Daily Report

Friday, 15 May 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 May 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:29 P.M., 15 May 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Angela Crawley:

[43969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether accredited lenders that assess applications to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme make their assessments (a) based on the applicant's individual merit and (b) not based on the applicant's status as a current business customer.

Paul Scully:

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) has been introduced to help small and medium-sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. Businesses are not required to bank with a lender in order to apply for a Bounce Back Loan with them. A full list of accredited lenders can be found on the British Business Bank website.

To be eligible for the scheme, businesses must:

- be based in the UK
- have been negatively affected by coronavirus
- not have been an 'undertaking in difficulty' on 31 December 2019
- not already be claiming under:
 - o Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
 - o Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)
 - o COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility

To apply for the scheme businesses must complete a short, simple, online application form, meaning that applications can be submitted and processed rapidly. Businesses should then be able to access loans within a matter of days. The Government is providing lenders with a 100% guarantee on each loan to give them the confidence they need to support the smallest businesses in the country.

The Government continues to work with banks and other finance providers to help SMEs access the finance they need.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage

Jerome Mayhew:

[44034]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) develop carbon capture and storage technology and (b) retrain and redeploy oil and gas sector workers in low-carbon industries.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We are committed to deploying carbon capture and storage (CCS) this decade as we work towards Net Zero by 2050 and see an opportunity for the UK to become a global leader in CCS.

That's why we announced a new CCS Infrastructure Fund which will enhance long-term competitiveness of UK's industrial regions by providing at least £800million to establish CCS in at least two UK clusters, one by the mid-2020s and another by 2030, contributing to our net zero targets and levelling up the economy.

In parallel, we are investing over £40 million between 2016 and 2021 in innovation funding carbon capture, usage and storage. United Kingdom Research and Innovation has also recently announced the allocation of the first phase of funding for the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge, in which we expect carbon capture and storage to play an important role.

The upstream oil and gas sector remains an important sector in its own right. However, as we transition to a low carbon economy we expect the oil and gas sector, including its supply chain, to have a key role in delivering this transformation. We are already seeing this happening as the supply chain uses its existing skills and capabilities to diversify into low-carbon sectors such as offshore wind. We are working with the sector on our manifesto commitment to deliver a transformational oil and gas Sector Deal which we expect to focus around the energy transition.

■ Ceramics: Manufacturing Industries**Jonathan Gullis:**[\[43772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support supply chains in the ceramics industry in (a) the UK and (b) Stoke-on-Trent North constituency.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is working tirelessly to protect our people and businesses, during and after the COVID-19 outbreak, including those in the ceramics industry.

The Government has taken unprecedented action to support businesses, which may be of benefit to the ceramics industry. Measures include:

- £330 billion worth of Government-backed loans through the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the newly launched Bounce Back Loans Scheme.
- VAT deferment for firms for the next quarter.
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, where employers are eligible to apply for a Government grant of 80% of their workers' salaries, up to £2500 per month.

Locally, the Government has supported and invested in 38 Growth Hubs across England. Growth Hubs provide businesses with free advice, and improve awareness and coordination to increase the take-up of the business support schemes that are available.

In the financial year 2018/19, the Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) reached over 5000 business individuals. This included supporting 2231 businesses with face-to-face support, of which 107 received high-intensity support. The LEP has also helped 491 individuals to start a new business.

■ **Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**

Angela Crawley: [\[43968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, whether the accreditation process for prospective new lenders can be prioritised so that support from that scheme is available to an increased number of small businesses.

Paul Scully:

Accrediting new lenders for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) is a priority for the British Business Bank. The Bank is working at pace to accredit more lenders to further extend the Scheme's reach and provide more choice for smaller businesses.

The Bank has put substantial additional resources in place to create a streamlined process within the Bank to help onboard new lenders seeking accreditation as quickly as possible. For example, existing lenders accredited under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILs) may have an expedited accreditation process for the BBLs.

There are currently 16 accredited lenders for the BBLs.

■ **Feed-in Tariffs**

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[43575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to include hydropower schemes in the terms of the Feed in Tariff Order of 30 March 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Hydropower schemes with accreditation deadlines falling between 1 March and 30 September 2020 are within the scope of the Feed-In Tariffs (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Order 2020.

■ **Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus**

John Spellar: [\[43591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support the manufacturing sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Manufacturing is a critical part of our economy and the Government is engaging with industry to ensure that we can support our manufacturing sectors during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many businesses across the aerospace, chemical, automotive, steel, aluminium, pharmaceutical, packaging, and other sectors are playing a direct role in combatting COVID-19. These businesses are producing the materials and equipment necessary, as well as enabling the services that we need to fight the spread of the virus and keep the country running.

We have put in place an unprecedented package of Government support to help with business continuity and to give manufacturers and their suppliers the support they. These measures include:

- £330 billion worth of Government-backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses across the UK.
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to help small and medium-sized businesses to access vital financial support.
- Our new Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) to allow more firms to benefit from Government-backed support.
- The Bounce Back Loans scheme for small businesses, which complements the CBILS and CLBILS schemes.
- Deferring VAT payments for firms to the next quarter, until the end of June, which represents a £30 billion injection into the economy.
- Our Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, where small and large employers will be eligible to apply for a Government grant of 80% of workers' salaries up to £2,500 a month. This is backdated to 1 March 2020 and available for at least three months.

Seema Malhotra:

[43654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support the manufacturing sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Manufacturing is a critical part of our economy and the Government is engaging with industry to ensure that we can support our manufacturing sectors during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many businesses across the aerospace, chemical, automotive, steel, aluminium, pharmaceutical, packaging, and other sectors have answered the call to action. These businesses are playing a direct role in combatting COVID-19 by producing the materials and equipment necessary, as well as enabling the services that we need to fight the spread of the virus and keep the country running.

We have put in place an unprecedented package of Government support to give manufacturers and their suppliers the support they need to ensure business continuity. These measures include:

- £330 billion worth of Government-backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses across the UK.

- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) to help small and medium-sized businesses to access vital financial support.
- The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) to allow more firms to benefit from Government-backed support at this difficult time.
- The Bounce Back Loans scheme for small businesses, which complements the CBILS and CLBILS schemes.
- Deferring VAT payments for firms to the next quarter, until the end of June, which represents a £30 billion injection into the economy.
- Our Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, where small and large employers will be eligible to apply for a Government grant of 80% of workers' salaries up to £2,500 a month. This will be backdated to 1 March 2020 and available for at least three months.

■ **Rolls Royce**

John Spellar:

[43590]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions the Government has had with Rolls Royce on (a) worker safety, (b) job protections, (c) financial assistance from the Government and (d) manufacturing of personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government regularly speaks with Rolls-Royce and has worked closely with the company in response to COVID-19. The company has set out the steps it has taken, consistent with the Government's guidance, on worker safety; job protections utilising the Job Retention Scheme; developing and donating Personal Protective Equipment; and manufacturing ventilators.

We have discussed with Rolls-Royce the various Government business support schemes available to the company and its suppliers. Rolls-Royce has also been part of the Department's regular engagements with the wider aerospace sector about business support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Seema Malhotra:

[43653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions the Government has had with Rolls Royce on (a) worker safety, (b) job protections, (c) financial support from the public purse and (d) manufacturing personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government regularly speaks with Rolls-Royce and has worked closely with the company in response to COVID-19. The company has set out the steps it has taken, consistent with the Government's guidance, on worker safety; job protections utilising the Job Retention Scheme; developing and donating Personal Protective Equipment; and manufacturing ventilators.

We have discussed with Rolls-Royce the various Government business support schemes available to the company and its suppliers. Rolls-Royce has also been part of the Department's regular engagements with the wider aerospace sector about business support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Civil Servants

Rachel Hopkins:

[43779]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, in which properties in London managed by the Government Property Agency civil servants from more than one Department work in the same building; and what the names are of those Departments.

Chloe Smith:

The Government Property Agency manages a number of multi-let buildings in London on behalf of Government Departments. The Agency supports the Whitehall Campus and Hubs Programme to transform central government's ageing office estate - creating 'Great Places to work' - consolidating to a single interoperable / interconnected campus of shared, flexible, modernised, energy efficient buildings. Building in new capabilities, including technology that supports Smarter Working, the delivery of better public services and driving efficiencies by minimising vacant space. Further details are available online on the [Government Property Agency's Business Plan for 2020-2021](#).

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[43601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which contract awards have been postponed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and which programmes have had their (a) initial operating capability or (b) full operating capability postponed as a result of that outbreak.

Jeremy Quin:

A small number of contract awards have been delayed as a result of Covid-19. However Defence project teams are continuing to work closely with industry to maintain the pipeline of contract opportunities, with around 450 contracts having been placed since the start of the lockdown period. This is 150 more than in the same period last year.

It is not yet clear what the full impact will be of the Covid-19 outbreak on Ministry of Defence programmes, although it is inevitable that there will be some repercussions. We will remain closely engaged with our strategic suppliers to monitor and understand the impact of Covid-19 on Defence during this critical time.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Internet: Safety****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[45258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 6 May 2020 to Question 42080 on Internet: Safety, for what reasons the Government no longer plans to publish a full response to the Online Harms White Paper in Spring 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

As is the case right across Government, we are prioritising our handling of COVID-19 to support our citizens, sectors, and public bodies. However, DCMS and the Home Office are working at pace to minimise any delay and will publish a full government response as soon as possible, later this year.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[43983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on voluntary and community organisation finances.

Mr John Whittingdale:

My department is aware of the financial impact that covid - 19 has on charities finances and is continuously monitoring the overall health of the sector.

The £750 million package of support announced by the Chancellor on 8 April is available for all charities, irrespective of size, providing frontline services to vulnerable people affected by the pandemic and at risk of financial hardship, due to the increase in demand for services.

We will continue to work closely to assess how we can support charities in doing their important work.

Rachael Maskell:[\[43984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with voluntary and community organisations on their future resilience in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Ministers and officials are in regular contact with the voluntary sector and are establishing mechanisms to collate robust and ongoing insights into the overall health of the sector.

We are aware that many charities continue to face a significant loss of income due to Covid-19, through reductions in fundraising, trading and investment income.

Support measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme can assist with easing the burden placed on organisations that are unable to operate due to social

distancing restrictions. The £750 million package of support for charities announced by the Chancellor on 8 April provides targeted support to organisations providing frontline services to vulnerable people affected by the pandemic.

We will continue to work closely to identify further support charities require through this time of financial instability.

■ Voluntary Work: Young People

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[45536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the National Citizens Service continues to operate in 2020 during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Given the uncertainty about how long social distancing restrictions will be in place, the 2020 NCS summer programme will not take place in its traditional format. Instead, the Department is working closely with the NCS Trust, the Government Arms' Length Body commissioned to deliver the programme, to develop an alternative offer for this summer.

The details of the alternative summer programme are being developed at pace between DCMS and the NCS Trust. Any offer will be fully compliant with Government guidelines in response to COVID-19.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Coronavirus

Chi Onwurah:

[\[43903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on apprenticeships; and what guidance has been issued to those that employ apprentices where the apprentice can no longer undertake their work or studies due to that outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We continue to closely monitor the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on apprenticeships. We know that social distancing measures have created some challenges for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations.

We have introduced a number of flexibilities, which remain in place, so apprentices can continue learning and complete their apprenticeships, including promoting the remote delivery of training and assessment and allowing apprentices who have been furloughed to continue their off-the-job training.

The government has announced steps to allow workers, including apprentices, to begin returning to work where it is safe to do so, and in line with the safer working guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>. Employers, providers and apprentices should continue to mutually agree where and how training takes place.

Where it is not possible to continue training or assessment due to COVID-19, we have enabled apprentices, employers and providers to initiate a break in learning, to ensure that apprentices can continue and complete their apprenticeships when it is possible to do so.

Our latest guidance on the support available for apprentices, employers and training providers is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>

We continue to keep this guidance under review.

■ Children: Coronavirus

Dr Ben Spencer:

[44049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the long-term effect on children's physical and mental health of the covid-19 lockdown; and what steps his Department is taking to mitigate those effects.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Health and Social Care has responsibility for children and young people's health and we are working with them, Public Health England and NHS England to understand the impact COVID-19 is having. It is clear that physical and mental health support is more important than ever during COVID-19.

Public Health England has published guidance for parents/carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

The Department for Education's guidance for parents/carers and schools covers how they can support children's mental health. This information is available at the following links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>.

We have also developed online education resources, including resources to support mental wellbeing, physical activity, and special educational needs and disabilities

(SEND): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>.

The NHS Change for Life website and Sport England's Join the Movement campaign both provide advice on staying physically active.

Access to support from health services remains important. NHS services remain open for everyone and leading mental health charities are being supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. The NHS is also setting up 24/7 open access telephone lines for urgent mental health support for people of all ages. The Department for Education is working across government on further support, including the first of the newly established Mental Health Support Teams which are now working in or near schools and colleges, to support children during the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Education: Coronavirus

Vicky Foxcroft:

[43707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that disabled pupils in (a) primary and (b) secondary schools are able to access (i) home learning and (ii) educational support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[43708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that disabled students in (a) further and (b) higher education are able to access (i) home learning and (ii) educational support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The department is committed to ensuring that all pupils and students, including those who are disabled, are able to learn and access educational support during the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why we have asked educational settings to remain open for pupils and students with an education, health and care (EHC) plan where a risk assessment has determined that their individual needs can be better supported at their educational setting than at home.

For pupils and students who remain at home, while educational settings remain responsible for education provision, we have worked to help provide additional support to disabled pupils and students of all ages and needs.

We have published a list of high quality online educational resources to support home learning, including materials for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND). This includes resources that are suitable for pupils and

students with SEND of all ages, from early years to those in further and higher education settings. We will be publishing a second wave of home learning resources within the next few weeks. The initial list of resources can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education#special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>.

In addition, to support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education for disabled pupils, the Oak National Academy launched its SEND Specialist Curriculum on 4 May. This is providing educational support to disabled children and young people with more profound needs who would normally receive their education in specialist settings. More details are available here:

<https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom/specialist/#subjects>.

Furthermore, we have published detailed guidance for parents, teachers and schools on how to best provide educational support at home. This includes specific guidance for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, which provides links to further specialist home learning resources for disabled pupils and students.

Designed to cater to all needs and ages, these links include resources from the Early Years Alliance and TechAbility, a specialist organisation for students in mainstream and specialist further education colleges. More details are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-with-send-continue-their-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Office for Students has committed to protecting university students by working with providers to develop practical ways to maintain teaching quality and standards, and enable adequate exams and assessment, including for students who are disabled.

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Seema Malhotra:

[43651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to bring forward (a) limits on and (b) eligibility requirements for funding reimbursed and refunded to schools that procure free school meals from retailers not included in the National Voucher Scheme.

Seema Malhotra:

[43652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from which budget he plans to reimburse funding for schools procuring free school meals from retailers not included in the National Voucher Scheme.

Vicky Ford:

Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure, and this will ensure they are able to meet their regular financial commitments, while delivering the provision required during this unprecedented period.

Where possible, schools are encouraged to work with their existing suppliers to provide meals or food parcels. If they are unable to use this, we have developed a national scheme to provide supermarket vouchers via the Edenred online portal. This portal allows schools to directly order vouchers to be sent to families for use at Aldi, McColl's, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose and M&S. Schools will not have to pay for these vouchers as the costs of this scheme will be picked up centrally by the Department for Education.

We recognise that it may not be convenient or possible for schools in some areas to use these supermarkets. Where schools use their own alternatives to the national voucher scheme they are able to claim for additional costs incurred in supporting free school meal pupils. As set out in our guidance, schools will be able to claim up to a certain limit, depending on their number of pupils, and where they are unable to meet these additional costs from their existing resources. In exceptional instances where individual schools face additional costs that are higher than the grant's limits, schools will be able to apply to increase their limit. The full additional costs guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools>.

Siobhain McDonagh:

[43825]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the (a) cost to the public purse is each week and (b) average weekly cost is per child of the free school meal voucher scheme.

Vicky Ford:

Where possible, schools are encouraged to work with their existing suppliers to provide meals or food parcels to free school meal-eligible children currently at home due to school closures. Where this is not possible, the national voucher scheme is available to support schools with this process.

The scheme allows schools to place orders for supermarket gift cards on behalf of parents and carers. These are worth £15 a week per child. Thousands of schools have already accessed the scheme, and many hundreds of thousands of families are already redeeming vouchers. Edenred has reported that over £70 million worth of voucher codes has been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families through the scheme as of Tuesday 12 May.

■ Graduates: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson:

[42187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to promote entrepreneurship programmes for 2020 graduates at higher education establishments during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The UK is home to leading universities that generate many of the skills that our economy needs.

The higher education sector plays an important role in teaching a broad range of skills in undergraduate and postgraduate study (for example, in relation to problem solving, analytical thinking, collaboration, teamwork, management and entrepreneurship), which enables millions of people to fulfil their potential.

Responsibility for entrepreneurship programme falls to universities as autonomous institutions that set their own curriculum in line with wider regulatory steers and it is for them to determine the support and skills that their graduates need.

There are a range of master's courses available to students that have entrepreneurship on their curriculum. Postgraduate loans are available to eligible students studying for designated master's courses on a part-time or full-time basis.

■ Schools: Breakfast Clubs

Christian Wakeford:

[\[44069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to extend the National School Breakfast Programme to the May half term holidays.

Vicky Ford:

Alongside our national approach to supporting free school meal pupils who are not attending school, we are committed to supporting schools and children who benefit from our breakfast club programme. This programme operates during term time periods.

Our suppliers, Family Action along with Magic Breakfast, are in contact with schools on the programme, where possible, and are working closely with them to target the children most in need to continue to provide them with a healthy breakfast.

Family Action have reported that over 1000 schools in disadvantaged areas are registered to receive breakfast deliveries from this programme during the coronavirus outbreak. These schools are located nationwide across England.

Schools on the programme can choose to support target children in the way which works best for them; this may include parents collecting food parcels from open schools or breakfast food 'drop offs' to target families. This should be arranged alongside the school's wider support for children on free school meals, and follow social distancing guidelines.

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

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rushanara Ali:

[\[43916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the additional costs incurred by parents as a result of school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

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.

Although we have not made a calculation of any additional costs incurred by parents due to school closures during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department is taking significant action to support families during this period.

We have asked schools to support pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We recognise that providing meals and food parcels is not a practicable option for all schools, and we therefore launched a national voucher scheme on 31 March, with costs covered by the Department.

In addition, we have committed over £100 million to support the provision of remote education, including by providing devices (including laptops, tablets and related services) and access to the internet for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Furthermore, the Government has made a number of changes to the welfare system to ensure people are receiving the support they need. These include increasing the standard rate of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit for this year by around £1,000 per year. People who need money urgently continue to be able to access up to a month's Universal Credit advance upfront by applying online or by telephone. In addition, Statutory Sick Pay now applies from day one, rather than the fourth day of illness, and we are increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants so that it covers the cheapest third of local rents – which is on average £600 more in people's pockets.

Taken together, these measures represent an injection of over £6.5 billion into the welfare system and, along with the other job and business support programmes announced by the Chancellor, represent one of the most comprehensive packages of support introduced by an advanced economy in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

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

■ Students: Coronavirus**Daniel Zeichner:****[43042]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether a year 13 student who is (a) employed or (b) volunteering full-time during the covid-19 outbreak is classified as (i) a mid-year leaver or (ii) still on-roll.

Gillian Keegan:

As per published funding guidance, to count as retained:

- For academic programmes: a student must stay on or complete at least one of the academic aims in their programme in the academic year.

- For vocational programmes: a student must stay on or complete their core aim in the academic year.

Year 13 students leaving education to take up a full time job or volunteering opportunity and who do not meet the above conditions, would not be count as retained. 16 to 19 providers have been asked to continue to provide care for vulnerable students and the dependants of key workers, and provide education remotely for other students.

However, we have stated in our Further Education operational guidance that we are reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on student retention in the 16 to 19 funding formula and will provide further guidance on this and on recording leaving dates in due course. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Beef: Prices

Carla Lockhart:

[44066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to address falling beef prices for UK producers; and what steps he is taking to promote UK beef to international markets during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Beef producers, as with other sectors, have been directly impacted by the closure of the food service sector as a result of the lockdown measures taken in response to Covid-19. This has led to problems with carcass imbalance.

The Government has well established ways of working with the food and farming industry supply chain to address temporary disruption. Defra and the devolved administrations are sharing the latest stakeholder information and data to ensure we have an evidence base for what is happening in specific markets, or specific geographical regions during the Covid-19 outbreak. The Secretary of State is also having regular meeting with the NFU and representatives of the beef sector.

Covid-19 impacts are also manifesting in the loss of export markets which would normally give value to parts of the carcass for which there is little demand in the UK and the shift away from the hospitality and food service sector to the retail sector.

Prices for prime cattle are showing signs of stabilising as industry has adapted and evolved to the current climate. Prices are up 3%, which is a positive sign of recovery.

Defra maintains a regular watching brief on the beef price and monitors all UK agricultural markets to provide forewarning of any atypical market movements and have continued to do so throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

To help overcome the current imbalance in retail sales of beef, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Quality Meat Scotland and Meat Promotion Wales are launching a £1.2 million 'Make It Steak', promotion campaign. The EU funded Private Storage Aid scheme also opened to the UK beef industry on 7 May.

Defra's Food is GREAT campaign is raising the international profile and reputation of food and drink from across the UK. It builds global demand, drives awareness and increases positive perceptions of UK food and drink products amongst international trade audiences and consumers. The campaign promotes excellent food and drink products from across the four nations of the UK. For instance, most recently the campaign showcased British beef, Northern Irish gin, Scotch Whisky, Welsh lamb, Scottish Salmon and English Sparkling Wine to Japanese consumers, trade and media in events coinciding with the Rugby World Cup in Japan in 2019. Defra also continues to work in partnership with industry and other Government departments to open new markets for the meat sector. This has included recently opening beef and lamb markets to Japan and progressing towards opening of the beef market to China for the first time in over 20 years.

■ **Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[43604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with large wholesale beverage manufacturers to encourage them to engage constructively with distributors, who are unable to sell stock due to the covid-19 lockdown.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has been working closely with the full spectrum of food and drink manufacturers across the country to maintain secure food and drink supply chains during COVID-19 lockdown. Regular engagement is taking place through a variety of forums, such as the weekly manufacturer calls led by Defra Secretary of State, as well as individual calls and engagement at a policy level.

■ **Meat: Sales**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[44067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with supermarkets in the UK to encourage the promotion and sale of meat produced on UK farms.

Victoria Prentis:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with supermarkets, retailers and other stakeholders in the food and drink industry covering a wide range of issues.

We are fortunate in the UK that we have the climate, the landscape, and entrepreneurial farmers and food producers that equip us to produce world-class food, and our farmers and growers are doing a fantastic job of feeding the nation during this challenging time.

Half of the food that the UK population consumes is home-grown and is renowned for its quality, and high standards of food safety, traceability, animal welfare and sustainability. We will always champion our farmers and producers; supporting them to grow more of our great British food, and to provide a reliable and sustainable food supply to the British public.

Supermarkets are already taking steps to promote and source British meat products. We are also working closely with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) as they develop consumer-facing marketing campaigns for the meat and dairy sectors. We will continue to engage with and support similar initiatives that highlight the qualities of British meat, dairy, and fruit and vegetable products.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Armed Conflict: Sexual Offences

Anthony Mangnall:

[44040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's report, The UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, published on 9 January 2020, whether he plans to waive his Department's rule that 80 per cent of programme funds must be spent by December of the financial year of disbursement in respect of that initiative.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office published a response to the recommendations of the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI)'s review of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) on 20 February. The UK is committed by law to spending 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) each year on Official Development Assistance (ODA). To ensure this target is met, HM Treasury requires all ODA-spending government departments to spend at least 80% of their ODA funding by the end of a calendar year (i.e. 31 December). The FCO is therefore required to spend 80% of its ODA allocation before the end of December, and all funds (ODA and non-ODA) must be spent by the end of the financial year.

■ Yemen: Coronavirus

Gill Furniss:

[R] [43718]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

As of 6 May, in Yemen there were 23 publicly confirmed cases of COVID-19 and four deaths. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) assessment is that a widespread outbreak in Yemen will be catastrophic. We are extremely concerned by the capacity of the healthcare system to respond to a severe outbreak of COVID-19. Only half of Yemen's health facilities are currently functioning and almost 20 million people lack

access to basic health care. We are also concerned about the capacity of the Yemeni authorities to contain and manage the outbreak given the ongoing conflict; we are urging all parties to agree a ceasefire and to work together to enable a nationwide response. The Department for International Development is currently assessing how best to respond through existing programmes in Yemen, with the WHO and United Nations Children's Fund already working with Yemen's Ministry of Health to strengthen the country's health care capacity, by providing vital equipment across the country.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Ambulance Services: Coronavirus

Charlotte Nichols: [\[43769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of employees of NHS Ambulance Trusts in England (a) were on sick leave, (b) were self-isolating due to covid-19 and (c) had tested positive for covid-19 in each of the last six weeks.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ Cancer: Rotherham

Alexander Stafford: [\[40813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that local NHS providers in Rotherham CCG are adhering to the most recent guidance on maintaining urgent cancer services.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with Cancer Alliances across the country to establish cancer hubs to maintain urgent cancer services, ensuring that capacity is available to treat all those who need it. Regional cancer Senior Responsible Officers will provide assurance that these arrangements are in place everywhere.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Richard Fuller: [\[38886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish on a daily basis the number of deaths from covid-19 in care home settings.

Helen Whately:

On 29 April 2020 the Government introduced a new method of reporting daily COVID-19 deaths so that it now includes reporting of deaths in all settings, including care homes. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/daily-death-reporting-now-includes-all-positive-covid-19-deaths>

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes all deaths registered with COVID-19 in each week including in care homes. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsregisteredweeklyinenglandandwalesprovisional/weekending24april2020>

Rachael Maskell: [41530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people that have died in hospital as a result of covid-19 were admitted from care homes.

Rachael Maskell: [41531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people that have died in hospital as a result of covid-19 were receiving domiciliary care in the community prior to admission to hospital.

Rachael Maskell: [41532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people that died of covid-19 in hospital were living in sheltered care before admission to hospital.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: On 29 April 2020 the Government introduced a new method of reporting daily COVID-19 deaths so that it now includes reporting of deaths in all settings. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/daily-death-reporting-now-includes-all-positive-covid-19-deaths>

The number of people who have died in hospital as a result of COVID-19 and who were admitted from care homes, domiciliary care in the community or who were living in sheltered care before admission, is not currently available or published in the format requested.

Public Health England publishes the hospital admission rate for England in the national COVID-19 surveillance reports. However, this does not include information on which settings people have been admitted from. The surveillance reports are available to view at the following link:

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

Rachael Maskell: [42105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the potential merits of discharging patients that have had covid-19 to transitional care provision for a period of isolation before they return to a care home.

Helen Whately:

We announced in our Adult Social Care Action Plan, on 15 April 2020, that testing will be provided to all care home residents before they are discharged from hospital into a care home.

A small number of people may be discharged from the National Health Service within the 14-day period from the onset of COVID-19 symptoms needing ongoing social care. Some care providers will be able to accommodate these individuals through effective isolation strategies or cohorting policies. If appropriate isolation/cohorted care is not available with a local care provider, the individual's local authority will be asked to secure alternative appropriate accommodation and care for the remainder of the required isolation period.

All residents, whether COVID-19-positive or not, can be safely cared for in a care home if appropriate infection control, isolation and cohorting advice is followed, as set out in the 'Admission and Care of Residents during COVID-19 Incident in a Care Home' guidance published on 2 April 2020.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to review our guidance in line with scientific advice.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[43666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people diagnosed with covid-19 have been discharged from hospital into residential care since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Government does not hold data on the number of people diagnosed with COVID-19 who have been discharged from hospital into residential care since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. We are working closely with local authorities, the care sector and NHS England

to understand the impact of COVID-19 on care homes, and ensure everyone has access to the right care in the most appropriate setting for their needs.

This is an unprecedented global pandemic and we will continue to work closely with the sector to keep our policies and data under review as the pandemic goes on.

■ Care Homes: Dementia**Caroline Lucas:**[\[43874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 April 2020 to Question 34959, what assessment he has made of the effect of social isolation on the progression of dementia symptoms for care home residents living with that condition; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We do not expect isolation to accelerate the progression of dementia in itself, but we are taking action to minimise the effects of isolation on residence and care staff. This includes commissioning research on the best ways to mitigate the psychological and

social impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia living in the community and their family carers. Work has already started on this research.

In addition, the Department has produced a range of guidance to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to review the need for further guidance including specific guidance on the care of people with dementia, informed by the views of stakeholders.

■ Carers: Protective Clothing

Tulip Siddiq:

[33586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make Personal Protective Equipment available to (a) family carers and (b) carers of people who self-fund their social care when looking after someone who is self-isolating due to covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 April 2020]: On 8 April 2020, the government published guidance for unpaid carers, which includes general advice, links to other information and support, and advice on caring where someone has symptoms. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-providing-unpaid-care>

We have also been working with Carers UK to provide carers with practical advice which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

Many carers of individuals who self-fund will receive additional PPE that is in the process of being delivered to all Care Quality Commission Registered Providers. For carers that may not receive this, such as Personal Assistants, they can approach the relevant local authority for adult social care, or clinical commissioning groups that provide the direct payment and ask for advice.

Guidance on the use of PPE in care settings can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance>

■ Coronavirus: Camostat Mesilate

Patrick Grady:

[42092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using camostat mesylate in the treatment of patients with covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 May 2020]: There are currently no approved treatments for COVID-19 and full evaluation of the merits of any potential treatments can only be made once clinical trials involving COVID-19 patients have been completed. The United Kingdom Government is considering a wide range of potential treatments in the current UK clinical trials. Drugs representing a range of relevant modes of action including - but not limited to - serine protease inhibitors, such as camostat, are being reviewed and prioritised by a panel of experts so that the most promising are put into clinical trials first.

■ Coronavirus: Death**Stephen Timms:**[\[43576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase support for areas identified by the Office for National Statistics as having the largest number of deaths involving covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Government has asked Public Health England to review how difference factors, such as ethnicity, age, gender, obesity and geographical location, can impact on people's health outcomes from COVID-19. Findings from the review will be published by the end of May 2020.

The Government remains committed to levelling up and spreading opportunity around this country, and this will be an important part of the economic and social recovery from COVID-19. We have introduced unprecedented measures to protect jobs and incomes, and we have strengthened the safety net for those who need it.

■ Coronavirus: Dialysis Machines**Alex Norris:**[\[41151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the availability of dialysis fluid.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is not aware of any shortages of fluids used to care for chronic dialysis patients.

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 the appropriate medicines.

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

■ Coronavirus: Disability

Dan Jarvis:

[30769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support will be provided to those with mobility issues who are self-isolating during the outbreak of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 23 March 2020]: The Department is working with other Government departments, the National Health Service and other organisations to rapidly put in place a range of measures to provide support to the general population and specific groups.

Access to services and how disabled people do so are determined by local authorities, who are responsible for complying with the Equality Act 2010.

We have also published a range of guidance to help people manage their mental and physical health and that of the people they care for. This includes our guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19 which is available at the following links:

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

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Thousands of approved volunteers are already helping to support the most vulnerable who are self-isolating as part of an unprecedented response from the public and we remain enormously grateful for this public goodwill and generosity.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Jim Shannon:

[43020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish its vaccine strategy for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has established a Vaccines Taskforce to coordinate and make the most of all the work going on across Government, academia and industry to accelerate the development and manufacture of a COVID-19 vaccine. The development of various coronavirus vaccines is at an early stage but progressing rapidly. The taskforce will draw on expert scientific and medical advice to make sure all parts of the pursuit of a vaccine are as efficient as possible. Further information on the Government's approach will be published in due course.

■ Epilepsy: Cannabis

Sir Mike Penning:

[43850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of Government financial support for (a) vulnerable children with intractable epilepsy who are reliant on privately-paid for medical cannabis and (b) other

patients using private prescriptions to access medical cannabis during the covid-19 outbreak; if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Pay

Barbara Keeley:

[\[37548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to provide a performance-related pay increase to (a) nurses and (b) others working in the health and social care sectors for their work during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 April 2020]: We are incredibly proud of all our health and care staff who work in both National Health Service and social care settings. We are working hard to ensure that staff feel supported and safe to continue the fight against COVID-19.

We recognise their extraordinary commitment, working day and night putting our care and safety at the centre of everything they do.

Annual pay awards for NHS staff are determined by an independent transparent pay review body process.

Pay for Agenda for Change staff is already set for 2020/21 as part of the multi-year (2018/19 – 20/21) pay and contract reform deal and for junior doctors following a multi-year pay and contract reform deal agreed in June 2019 (2019/20 – 22/23).

The pay review bodies will make pay recommendations for 2020/21 for consultants and speciality doctors.

We want to ensure that the NHS employment offer continues to attract, retain and reward staff and this offer continues to be kept under review.

Social care providers determine the level of pay for their employees on an individual basis.

It is vital that we continue to attract, retain and reward NHS and care staff and we are determined to do everything we can to show that they are truly valued.

■ Health Services: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Barbara Keeley:

[\[40540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether casual workers in the independent healthcare sector are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the event that their employers have entered into a retention agreement with the NHS.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: It is a decision for any employer, including those in the independent healthcare provider under contract to provide services to the National

Health Service, to choose to apply to access funds from the Government's COVID-19 Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to furlough some or all of their workers. Staff must agree to being furloughed.

CJRS allows employers to claim for 'employees' on any type of employment contract, including full-time, part-time, agency or flexible. The scheme covers casual and zero-hour workers where they are paid via the PAYE system.

All applications to furlough staff must be made to HM Revenue and Customs. HM Revenue and Customs is ultimately responsible for deciding which applications can receive financial support to furlough staff or not.

Organisations who are receiving public funding specifically to provide services necessary to respond to COVID-19 are not expected to furlough staff, casual or otherwise. This would include independent health care providers under contract to provide services to the NHS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it is not expected these providers would furlough substantive staff or "casual" workers i.e. zero-hours contract workers on staff Banks paid via PAYE where those staff are needed to deliver services within scope of the contract and the contract includes funding for staff costs.

■ Health Services: Ethnic Groups

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[41587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what step he is taking to ensure that BAME patients who are migrants have access to free medical care on the NHS during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Regulations came into force on 29 January 2020 to add Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (now known as COVID-19) to Schedule 1 of the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015. This means there can be no charge made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis, or, if positive, treatment, of COVID-19.

To help ensure that no one is deterred from safely accessing healthcare for COVID-19 this information has been widely communicated to NHS staff and the public and has been translated into 40 languages. This message has been shared with organisations representing vulnerable migrant groups.

■ Health Services: Staff

Ian Paisley:

[\[40612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on increasing staffing levels within the NHS in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England has published a suite of documents to support National Health Service organisations with the management of their workforce. All of the documents can be found on NHS England's website at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/workforce/>

The NHS has also run a campaign asking for recently retired doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals to return to practice. Further details can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/returning-clinicians/>

■ Hospices: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:****[40646]**

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 (a) capacity and (b) level of staffing in the hospice sector; how hospices are supporting the families of terminally-ill patients due to social distancing guidance; and what steps he is taking to ensure that hospices continue to benefit from community fundraising activities during the outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Department holds regular discussions with representatives of the hospice sector about how they are coping during the COVID-19 outbreak, including capacity and staffing issues. On 8 April 2020 the Chancellor announced up to £200 million in funding for hospices, as part of a wider package of £750million for the wider voluntary and charity sector to support hospices in increasing the capacity of NHS services. To deliver this NHS England and NHS Improvement use a national tracker, which reports capacity and staffing levels for the hospice sector, to monitor the effect of COVID-19 on the healthcare system.

Hospices provide high quality support to the families of terminally-ill patients and will continue to do so in alignment with the safety aspects that inform the guidance on social distancing. For example, many are offering online and telephone support to families during this time.

The Department recognises that social distancing rules are impacting community fundraising, including events and the activities of charity shops. To help hospices continue to be financially viable during the pandemic, they are eligible for a range of measures which apply to charities such as having the option to defer their VAT bills to the end of June, paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan. Many charity shops are already eligible for 80% charitable rate relief and will benefit from the new enhanced retail rate relief at 100%.

Hospitals: Chickenpox

Chris Green: [42084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for the increase in the number of hospital admissions of people with chickenpox; and whether he has made an assessment of the correlation between the rate of cases of chickenpox and hospital admissions.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not assessed the correlation between the rates of cases of chickenpox and hospital admissions. However, in 2019, Eurosurveillance published a study of hospitalisation due to varicella in England between 2004 and 2017.

The study showed there were 61,024 admissions with varicella between 2004 and 2017 and 38.1% had a recognised varicella complication. Hospitalisation increased by 25% and the proportion with complicated varicella increased by 24% from 2004/05 to 2016/17. The most common complications were bacterial skin infections, pneumonia, febrile convulsions and encephalitis.

Hospitals: Discharges

Justin Madders: [39675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been (a) admitted to and (b) discharged from hospital as a result of covid-19 in each (a) region and (b) NHS Trust.

Justin Madders: [39830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been discharged from hospital after recovering from covid-19 in each (a) age group, (b) category of sexual identity, (c) ethnic group and (d) category of underlying health condition.

Edward Argar:

The number of people who have been admitted with COVID-19 or discharged from hospital after recovering from COVID-19 is not currently available or published in the format requested.

Public Health England publishes the hospital admission rate for England in the National COVID-19 surveillance reports. However, this does not include information on discharged and recovered patients. The surveillance reports are available to view at the following link:

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

Kidneys: Transplant Surgery

Alex Norris: [41146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the kidney transplant waiting list.

Alex Norris:

[\[41147\]](#)

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 availability of kidney transplants from (a) living and (b) deceased donors.

Helen Whately:

While waiting lists continue to be monitored, an assessment on the effect on the kidney transplant waiting list cannot be made until transplant units reopen. Factors will include patients wishing to be relisted at this time; patients who have experienced acute kidney injury from COVID-19 and may become dialysis-dependent; and patients who have been unable to attend an assessment clinic at this time due to the risk to their health.

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. Deceased organ donors are being referred and a few kidney transplants are taking place most days. A joint decision by NHS England and NHS Improvement and NHS Blood and Transplant was taken to cancel the living donor matching runs following an assessment of risk. Patients waiting for a kidney transplant are able to receive dialysis as a short-term alternative treatment.

■ **Medical Equipment and Protective Clothing: Procurement**

Catherine West:

[\[37878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government is engaged in bidding to secure (a) personal protective equipment and (b) testing equipment for use in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

We have set up a cross-Government personal protective equipment (PPE) sourcing unit to secure new supply lines from across the world and a call to industry has been issued to companies at home to manufacture and supply additional PPE at scale. There has been limited United Kingdom manufacture of PPE to date and so new supply channels for materials to make PPE have been sourced at pace in order to enable new manufacturing to commence.

On testing equipment, there is a clear and unprecedented demand for testing equipment and suppliers are ramping up their capacity as quickly as possible. We are working closely with industry to obtain maximum possible supplies for the UK and with the scientific community to explore new options for test kits.

■ **Midwives: Training**

Justin Madders:

[\[43963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Questions HL732 and HL733, how many training places on midwifery courses are planned for each academic year up to 2022-23.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: Health Education England is undertaking scenario planning to deliver the commitment for 25% growth (3,650 placements) by 2023. This will inform regional and national discussions with key stakeholders, including universities, about clinical placement capacity for autumn 2020 and onwards.

■ NHS: Mental Health**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[43111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has put in place to support NHS staff's mental wellbeing during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a comprehensive emotional, psychological and practical support package for National Health Service staff during and following the COVID-19 response.

This currently includes free access to well-being apps, virtual staff common rooms for mutual support, a dedicated support helpline and text service (in partnership with Samaritans), and a separate helpline offering bereavement support (in partnership with Hospice UK). NHS organisations are now also able to procure supplementary occupational health support for their staff through a new framework, available until 31 December.

More information on how to access this support can be found online at the following link:

people.nhs.uk/help

■ NHS: Migrant Workers**Apsana Begum:**[\[41606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to suspend all NHS charges for migrants during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Regulations came into force on 29 January 2020 to add Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (now known as COVID-19) to Schedule 1 of the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015. This means there can be no charge made to an overseas visitor for the diagnosis, or, if positive, treatment, of COVID-19.

In addition, migrants who are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, or exempt from charge under the Charging Regulations, such as those covered under the Immigration Health Surcharge, those seeking asylum in the UK and those who are victims of modern slavery are not subject to charges for most NHS care. The Government does not intend to suspend the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 2015.

■ NHS: Sick Leave**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[43100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff sick days were taken as a result of mental health issues in (a) 2019 and (b) 2010.

Helen Whately:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of days lost due to mental health reasons and the number of absences due to unknown reasons across all staff in the time periods specified, full time equivalent (FTE).

TIME	DAYS LOST DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH REASONS	UNKNOWN REASON FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE
January 2010 – December 2010	2,060,416	4,055,904
January 2019 – December 2019	4,796,928	927,827

Source: NHS Digital

Figures cover 1 January to 31 December each year.

Mental health reasons for 2010 includes the following reasons: 'Other Mental Disorders', 'Psychological', 'Stress' and 'Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses'.

Mental health reasons for 2019 includes the reason of 'Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses'.

Part of the increase in FTE days lost by sickness absence reason may be attributable to the improvement in completion of sickness absence reason information by staff.

The recording of sickness absence may have been increased by initiatives such as the NHS Health and Wellbeing framework.

Mental health awareness has increased in the last 10 years, with employers being more understanding and employees feeling more able to disclose mental health issues.

■ NHS: Staff**Carla Lockhart:** [28105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what additional mental health and well-being support is being made available for NHS employees.

Helen Whately:

Employers across the National Health Service are responsible for helping their staff maintain and improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing and the NHS's ambition is to be a beacon of good practice, leading the way in how this can be achieved. The final NHS People Plan, places strong emphasis on ensuring an improved health and wellbeing offer for all NHS staff. NHS England also has an Employee Assistance Programme provider, offering a confidential health and wellbeing service to staff that offer the following services counselling – immediate access to 24-hour telephone counselling, legal information services, financial information services, medical support team and online health and wellbeing support.

■ NHS: Working Hours**Daisy Cooper:** [39776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the suspension of the European Working Time Directive on the physical and mental wellbeing of the NHS workforce; and what the timeframe is for the reinstatement of that Directive.

Helen Whately:

The Working Time Regulations 1998 remain in force during the COVID-19 pandemic and include flexibilities in the regulations to vary or exclude some of the restrictions in special circumstances and done so by collective or workforce agreement. Guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/staff-terms-and-conditions/working-hours-and-working-time-regulations>

The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 allows carryover of leave and payment in lieu on termination if leave cannot be taken during the pandemic. This enables staff to carry over up to 20 days (pro-rated for part-time staff) of annual leave in the following two leave years.

Staff rest and recuperation is vital and employers must monitor staff annual leave and ensure that their staff have enough rest to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

■ Northwick Park Hospital: Ventilators**Gareth Thomas:** [30667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many ventilators Northwick Park Hospital has; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

At the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in March there were more than 8,000 mechanical ventilators in hospitals across the United Kingdom. As of 4 May, we have around 10,900 mechanical ventilators available to National Health Service patients. In addition, there are also 6,291 non-invasive ventilators available to the NHS across the UK which were not available before the start of the crisis in mid-March (plus a further 73 from the private sector).

These figures will continue to rise as we procure further equipment and more products from the PM's ventilator challenge become available.

Mechanical ventilators are allocated pro rata between England and the devolved administrations, but then within each nation decisions of where to send ventilators are based on clinical need. In England hospitals can make a bid for ventilators and these are discussed and allocated with regional NHS England and NHS Improvement teams. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/04/C0233-ventilator-consumables-8-april.pdf>

Information on distributions of mechanical ventilators to Northwick Park Hospital is not currently available.

■ Palliative Care: Coronavirus**Rosie Cooper:****[41403]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to protect the provision of end-of-life care by community-based palliative care teams during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: It is important to ensure patients requiring high-quality palliative and end of life care, whether in hospices or in the community, continue to receive that support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

To support local commissioners during this challenging time, NHS England and NHS improvement has developed a standard operating procedure for community palliative and end of life care. This is due to be published shortly and will contain guidance for healthcare professionals working in community settings, taking into account the safety of clinicians.

In addition, a range of guidance has already been made available to support the delivery of high-quality end of life care in community settings, including:

- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 'Rapid Guideline: managing symptoms (including at the end of life) in the community';
- The NHS England and NHS Improvement clinical specialty guide 'Community Palliative, End of Life and Bereavement Care in the COVID-19 pandemic'; and

- The NHS England and NHS Improvement clinical guidelines for children and young people with palliative care needs in all care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guidance is available at the following links:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG163

elearning.rcgp.org.uk/pluginfile.php/149342/mod_resource/content/1/COVID%20Community%20symptom%20control%20and%20end%20of%20life%20care%20for%20General%20Practice%20FINAL.PDF

www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0249-clinical-guidelines-children-young-people-with-palliative-care-needs-24-04-2020.pdf

■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus

Sara Britcliffe:

[43776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allocate additional funding to pharmacies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

We understand the financial pressure of COVID-19 on community pharmacy which is why £300 million in extra advance payments have been made available to alleviate initial cash flow pressures. The Government has also provided additional funding to community pharmacy to cover costs associated with Bank Holiday opening at Easter and the Early May Bank Holiday and the new medicine delivery service commissioned for shielded patients, as well as making a contribution towards measures taken by community pharmacy to support social distancing.

We continue to work with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee and NHS England and NHS Improvement to examine what further funding community pharmacy may require to continue to supply medicines and to help their communities stay well.

■ Sign Language: Television

Dawn Butler:

[29915]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking ensure that official announcements on covid-19 are (a) accessible to all and (b) available in British Sign Language.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 March 2020]: All guidance, statements and public information released by the Government are readily available to read online.

In light of COVID-19, the Government has developed a national campaign to provide information, guidance and reassurance to the public. The campaign spans owned, earned and paid-for channels to maximise reach and engagement for people both with and without internet. For example, the press activity includes over 600 national, regional and local titles to reach communities throughout England, Scotland, Wales

and Northern Ireland. People will be able to see and hear the campaign advice in newspapers and magazines, on drive-time radio, online and through social media and on billboards and large digital displays, including at bus stops.

Information on COVID-19 from Public Health England and the Department is translated into British Sign Language. Videos can be found at the following link:

<https://www.signhealth.org.uk/>

NHS England operates an Accessible information Standard which sets out a specific, consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

■ **Silicosis**

Alexander Stafford:

[40831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been diagnosed with silicosis in (a) England, (b) Yorkshire, (c) the borough of Rotherham and (d) Rother Valley Constituency in the last calendar year.

Helen Whately:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ **Smoking: Public Places**

Mark Pritchard:

[43858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to allow local councils to prohibit smoking outside (a) restaurants and (b) other food outlets.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has a track record of reducing the harm caused by tobacco. The United Kingdom is a world leader and has been rated the best in Europe on tobacco control by independent experts.

The Health Act 2006 and the Smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 made it illegal to smoke in public enclosed or substantially enclosed areas and workplaces. Local authorities retain overall responsibility for the enforcement of the smokefree legislation and retain the power to make by-laws.

We support development and implementation of smoke-free policies locally in and around public premises. We believe local authorities are best placed to make decisions about the local populations which they serve.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus**Martyn Day:** [\[41546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities which have enacted provisions contained within the Coronavirus Act 2020 to suspend statutory duties to provide care needs assessments continue to be (a) transparent with the public and (b) compliant with guidance issued by his Department.

Helen Whately:

The Department published guidance which states that the decision to enact the provisions contained within the Coronavirus Act 2020 should be communicated to all providers, service users and carers, and that the accessibility of communication to service users and carers should be considered. The Coronavirus Act 2020 gave the Secretary of State a power to direct local authorities to comply with this guidance and the Department will keep this under review.

■ Social Services: Disability**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[37775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the provision of adequate care services for disabled people during the covid-19 pandemic.

Helen Whately:

We have set out a comprehensive action plan to support the adult social care sector in England throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, including ramping up testing, overhauling the way personal protective equipment is being delivered to care homes and helping to minimise the spread of the virus to keep people safe.

On 19 March we announced £1.6 billion to help local authorities deal with the immediate impacts of COVID-19, which many councils will have directed towards the adult social care services required to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 18 April we announced an additional £1.6 billion of funding to support councils delivering essential frontline services.

This funding is part of the Government's commitment to ensure the National Health Service and social care system, and other public services, have the resources required to tackle COVID-19. The government will continue to monitor pressures in the NHS and local government and will keep future funding under review.

Rosie Cooper: [\[43851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government will require local authorities to develop social care contingency plans with disabled people (a) who may develop more complex needs and (b) in the absence of family carers due to covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: Under the Care Act 2014 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities must develop social care contingency plans for emergency situations.

Local authorities should consider how to respond where need has significantly changed alongside the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care and the prioritisation guidance issued by the Department.

The Department published guidance for those who provide unpaid care to friends or family which advises carers to create an emergency plan for those they care for to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be needed. The guidance provides information on how to create an emergency plan and where to find support.

■ Vaccination**Matt Western:**[\[43129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase UK vaccine production capacity.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Vaccines Taskforce is working with the BioIndustry Association Taskforce to review and increase where possible, existing domestic capability to manufacture vaccines in response to COVID-19. This includes a review of the acceleration and increasing capacity of the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre, so that it becomes operational earlier than planned and can manufacture population level doses.

For COVID-19, the type of vaccine manufacturing capacity needed will be determined by the nature of the vaccine that is developed and the technology used to produce the vaccines. The scale of facility needed will depend on how potent the vaccines are, and the productivity of the processes used to produce them. This work is proceeding at pace across different vaccine types, while those vaccines are still under development.

■ Voluntary Work: Coronavirus**Henry Smith:**[\[40581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his statement in 10 Downing Street on 18 April 2020, how many of the 750,000 reported volunteers are providing telephone support to the extremely vulnerable group of people being asked to shield at home as a result of the covid-19 outbreak measures.

Helen Whately:

As of 1 May 2020, out of the 750,000 people who have signed up to the NHS Volunteer Responders programme in England, 607,074 volunteers have completed the necessary identity checks to begin helping those most vulnerable, more than

double the original target. Between 7 April – 1 May 2020, 17,594 check in and chats have been completed.

HOME OFFICE

■ Visas: Married People

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[43719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether furloughed salaries will be calculated as part of the earnings requirement for applications for spousal visas.

Kevin Foster:

The earnings requirement for those seeking a spouse visa is a minimum income of £18,600 or higher where a child is also applying for leave. Salaries received whilst the sponsor, or applicant who is in the UK with permission to work, is furloughed will be calculated as part of this minimum income requirement.

Income from other employment or self-employment, cash savings, pension, or property rental may also be counted; along with other sources of income where there are exceptional circumstances.

The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and may make further adjustments to requirements where necessary and appropriate to ensure people are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Paul Maynard:

[\[43868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reasons his Department asked the Local Government Association to withdraw its advice note to local authorities that coach operators should be classified as leisure businesses for the purposes of covid-19 business support grants.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Eligibility for the COVID-19 business support grant, which is being led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is based in part on eligibility for the expanded retail business rates discount. My Department published guidance on the expanded retail discount on 25 March 2020. Local authorities are responsible for implementing the discount in line with the guidance, which states that eligible properties are shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; those used by visiting members of the public for assembly and leisure; or hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. The majority of coach operators are therefore unlikely to be eligible for rates relief or related business support grants.

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

Sir George Howarth:

[\[43837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what methodology was used to determine the distribution of the second round of emergency funding to local authorities in response to the covid-19 outbreak; what consultation the Government undertook with organisations and individual stakeholders in determining that methodology; and if he will publish the advice received on that methodology from local government organisations.

Mr Simon Clarke:

On 18 March, Government announced a first wave of £1.6 billion of funding to respond to covid-19 impacts on local councils.

On 28 April, the Local Government Secretary announced allocations of an additional £1.6 billion to individual local authorities. Whereas the first funding allocation was primarily allocated to local authorities through the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula, in recognition that the greatest immediate pressures would fall on local authorities with social care responsibilities, this second wave of funding was allocated on a per capita basis. This reflects our latest understanding of the distribution of additional covid-related pressures, which are likely to be distributed in a way that is different from pre-existing needs. The 65:35 split in this per capita allocation between counties and districts in two-tier shire areas provides more funding to district councils than the first wave of funding, whilst providing significant support to social care authorities.

It is important that these two waves of funding are seen together and that false comparisons between the two are avoided. Across both waves, almost 70 per cent of district councils will receive £1 million or more in support, whilst more than 90 per cent of the funding will go to social care authorities.

We intend to publish a summary of the results of the financial monitoring in due course.

■ Local Government Finance: Doncaster

Nick Fletcher:

[\[43775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will list the (a) name and (b) value of each Government grant awarded to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as a result of covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Details are set out in the table below

COVID-19 FUNDING - FIRST WAVE	£10,089,671
Covid-19 Funding - second wave	£8,591,546
Hardship Fund	£2,992,753

COVID-19 FUNDING - FIRST WAVE	£10,089,671
Business Rates Relief Measures	£37,024,117
Business Rates Support Grants	£64,402,000
Homelessness Covid-19 Funding	£18,000
TOTAL	£123,118,087

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on local authority (a) finances and (b) ability to deliver services.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is aware of the impact on authorities' financial position as a result of covid-19. We have asked local authorities to monitor changes in their income and expenditure as a result of the pandemic through a data collection exercise. We will share a summary of the returns in due course, and I would like to encourage local authorities to keep engaging with us through the second round of returns, which will provide valuable data about what is happening on the front-line.

The Government has made a commitment to support all authorities with the additional cost pressures from the extra work and the specific tasks we have asked them to carry out as a result of the pandemic, including in relation to social care – both adult and children's, public health services, shielding the most vulnerable, homelessness and rough sleeping, supporting the NHS and managing excess deaths.

The £3.2 billion package of support recognises the additional costs and pressures on finances councils are facing as a result of the current crisis. It demonstrates the Government's commitment to making sure all councils have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

On top of this we have announced an additional £600 million to support care providers through a new Adult Social Care Infection Control and Workforce Resilience Fund. The additional £600 million for care homes will be channelled through councils to help reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes, and support wider workforce resilience.

■ Markets: Coronavirus

Chi Onwurah:

[\[43898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support markets during the covid-19 lockdown; and

what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the National Association of British Market Authorities on identifying their needs during that time.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Retail markets are part of the fabric of towns and cities across the country. With the current closure of outdoor and indoor markets, with the exception of market stalls which offer essential retail, such as grocery and food, Government has been working with key stakeholders in the retail markets industry to monitor the impacts of the current situation and explore what support is needed. This includes the National Association of British Market Authorities, with whom officials have active and ongoing engagement, including through the Retail Markets Forum on 4 May.

Self-employed market traders will be able to benefit from the support the Government announced on 26 March for the self-employed. The self-employed are eligible for a taxable grant worth 80 per cent of their average monthly profits over the last three years, up to £2,500 per month, through the coronavirus (Covid-19) Self-employment Income Support Scheme.

Eligible market stalls with a rateable value will also benefit from flat rate payments of £10,000 under the grant scheme for the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors announced on 17 March 2020.

On 1 May 2020 the Business Secretary announced that a further up to £617 million is being made available to Local Authorities in England to allow them to provide discretionary grants. This additional Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs but not liable for business rates or rates reliefs, including regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment.

We agree that retail markets will have an important role to play in helping the revival of high streets and town centres in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, and Government will continue to work with the retail markets industry to help facilitate this.

■ **Temporary Accommodation: Manchester**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[44044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will meet with local authority leaders in Manchester to discuss the proportion of people who have been newly housed in temporary accommodation under the emergency housing measures in response to covid-19 who have left or been evicted from that accommodation; and if he will make an assessment of the reasons for those evictions.

Luke Hall:

Over 90 per cent of those on the streets at the beginning of the crisis known to local authorities have now been made offers of safe accommodation, ensuring some of the most vulnerable in society are protected from the pandemic. This includes those rough sleeping or who have been living in accommodation with communal sleeping spaces such as night shelters.

On 2 May, Dame Louise Casey was appointed to spearhead a Taskforce to lead the next phase of the Government's response for rough sleepers during this pandemic. The Taskforce will work hand-in-hand with councils across the country on plans to ensure rough sleepers can move into long-term, safe accommodation once the immediate crisis is over – ensuring as few people as possible return to life on the streets. The taskforce will also ensure the thousands of rough sleepers now in accommodation continue to receive the physical and mental health support they need over the coming weeks while they continue to self-isolate from the virus.

Ministers have regular teleconferences to discuss emerging issues with all local authorities, and Ministers have spoken regularly to the Mayor of Greater Manchester throughout the pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Motor Vehicles: Turkey

Gareth Thomas:

[\[43823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect on the (a) manufacturer finances and (b) employment figures in the UK motor manufacturing industry of proposed post-transition customs arrangements with Turkey.

Graham Stuart:

The UK's manufacturing and motor manufacturing industry plays a vital role in the UK's economy by driving exports, innovation, job creation and productivity. We want to ensure that it continues to succeed.

At the end of the transition period, the UK will no longer be a member of the partial EU-Turkey customs union. We are preparing to negotiate a trade agreement with Turkey that would allow businesses in both the UK and Turkey to continue to trade with each other under preferential terms and deliver continuity of current arrangements as far as possible.

This department continues to engage with businesses in the automotive industry to understand their priorities and inform the UK's approach.

■ Tradeshow Access Programme

Bill Esterson:

[\[42004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the level of satisfaction amongst businesses with the Tradeshow Access Programme.

Graham Stuart:

The Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) is monitored as part of DIT's collective assessment of the support it offers to exporters.

The last published TAP-specific Business Satisfaction figures are from the UK Trade and Investment Performance and Impact Monitoring Survey, published in March 2015.

The research was conducted by an independent market research agency.

83% of the 130 businesses surveyed, who had participated in TAP as a UK group or delegation, were satisfied with the service in 2013-2014.

JUSTICE

■ Alternatives to Prison

Alex Cunningham:

[\[43642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to promote non-custodial alternatives to prison.

Chris Philp:

Sentencing in individual cases is entirely a matter for the independent courts. Custody should be imposed as a last resort. By law, courts are required to be satisfied that the offence committed is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified, and even when that threshold is met, the courts are able to consider whether a community sentence would be better in that particular case.

The Queen's Speech set out plans for new sentencing laws, including proposals for tougher community sentences, which will offer courts further effective alternatives to custodial sentences.

■ Coroners: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[43877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance he has issued to coroners on how to preserve the information that a person who has died had suspected covid-19 in the absence of a positive test; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Chalk:

Under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, coroners may require evidence (including written statements, documents or anything in a person's possession) relevant to their investigation into a person's death is made available to them. A record of their investigation using this evidence on cause of death is made and retained by the Senior Coroner. The Chief Coroner recently published guidance for coroners covering the Covid-19 pandemic which is available on the Judiciary.gov website. Where a death is certified by a registered medical practitioner as being of natural causes and no inquest takes place, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is retained by the Registrar of Births and Deaths and on a quarterly basis sent to the General Register Office for retention which may include a medical practitioner's certification that the cause of death was likely Covid-19 related.

■ Courts: Video Conferencing

Alex Cunningham:

[43640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much Government has spent on developing virtual courts in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a developing situation, and the forecast of the total cost relating to the development of virtual courts remains subject to change.

We are determined to keep our courts system running safely and ensure justice is delivered, we estimate that c.£5.85m will be spent in 2020/21 on remote hearings in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

This estimate relates only to HM Courts and Tribunals Service, any cost incurred by other government departments is not included.

■ Criminal Proceedings

Alex Cunningham:

[43638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the time from offence to completion in criminal court cases.

Chris Philp:

Our courts provide a vital public service and it is important that justice is delivered in a timely fashion wherever possible during the Covid-19 outbreak. We are working closely with the courts and judiciary to ensure that cases are progressed through the system as quickly as possible, including through greater use of audio and video hearings.

The courts are expediting sentencing hearings and prioritising remand hearings to ensure that public protection remains a core goal. Magistrates' court trials are now being listed wherever it is safe to do so, and every effort is being made to resume Crown Court jury trials. Representatives from across the criminal justice system are working at pace to agree the best way of doing this safely

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Finance

Rushanara Ali:

[43908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much funding the Department for Work and Pensions allocated to Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service in (a) 2018-19 and (b) 2019-20; and what proportion of the cost of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) that funding represented in each of those years.

Chris Philp:

Responsibility for the funding of the operation of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) transferred, with funding from the Department for Work and

Pensions to the Ministry of Justice on the creation of the Tribunals Service on 1 April 2006.

The contribution that the Department for Work and Pensions currently makes towards the costs of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support), covers the additional costs of that tribunal because of the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment benefit. This has led to an increase both in the number of appeals to the tribunal and, due to the increased complexity of the tests involved, their length and cost.

£000s		2018-19	2019-20
a	Contribution from DWP	35,341	39,998
b	Total Costs ¹	117,804	n/a
c	Proportion	30%	n/a

¹ Total cost of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) includes both direct and indirect costs. Total cost information by jurisdiction for 2019-20 will not be available until the financial accounts have been audited.

Rushanara Ali:

[\[43910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Answer of 3 July 2019 to Question 270759, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service of administering appeals against the Department for Work and Pensions' disallowance of employment and support allowance.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally. The cost of hearings for **employment support allowance** and personal independence payment are included in the overall cost of the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support Appeal).

■ Judges and Recorders

Alex Cunningham:

[\[43639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, on how many days (a) recorders and (b) judges have sat in each month from February 2019 to 2020.

Chris Philp:

The official statistics for judge sitting days (tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly, January to March 2019) were withdrawn on 5 September 2019, due to data discrepancies that were discovered after publication on 6 June 2019 and deemed potentially misleading to users. These discrepancies remain under independent investigation and, in line with the Code of Practice on Statistics, the Chief Statistician and Head of Profession decided to withdraw these tables until the investigations were complete and a revised set of figures could be compiled.

We plan to publish revised figures on 4 June 2020 that will include annual totals for all judges for 2019. The data for recorders will not be included as corrected figures are not yet available. The monthly data from February 2019 to December 2019 for part (b), for all judges, can be made available after 4 June 2020. The timing for when the equivalent data can be made available for recorders is currently unknown.

■ Legal Aid Scheme

Mr David Lammy:

[43826]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications have been made to the Legal Aid Agency hardship fund in each of the last six months; and what the average amount was paid to successful applicants.

Alex Chalk:

The LAA is working to ensure it can continue to support the legal support sector, helping them maintain access to justice to their vulnerable clients. Details of what financial relief may be available for practitioners facing cashflow problems can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-relief-for-legal-aid-practitioners>.

Historically, the LAA received a very low number of applications for payments made on grounds of hardship, usually numbering between 20 and 30 per year. As each claim was considered individually, the precise details of those claims processed over the last six months could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, MoJ have brought in regulation changes which substantially lower the thresholds at which a hardship claim can be submitted. As a result of the increase in claims anticipated by these amendments, these claims are now being more closely monitored. These regulation changes were introduced on 1st May, and therefore data in this capacity will be generated going forward, as such claims are received.

We will continue to work with the sector to ensure that the most vulnerable in society are provided with the representation and support they need through our legal aid system.

■ Prison Sentences: Mothers

Alex Cunningham:

[43643]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the effect on children's social care services of mothers receiving custodial sentences.

Lucy Frazer:

We recognise that maternal imprisonment can have an impact on children's social care services, and that children whose mothers are in prison are a vulnerable group and may need additional help to address both the short and long-term impacts that maternal imprisonment can have. Although the responsibility for the children of offenders sits with the Secretary of State for Education, we recognise the importance of joined-up working across Government and, in our Female Offender Strategy

(2018), encouraged a partnership-focused approach to address effectively the needs of female offenders.

We recognise the negative impacts on families of imprisoned mothers and the heightened risk of intergenerational offending. As part of the Female Offender Strategy, we commissioned Lord Farmer to undertake a review of the importance of family and other relational ties for women in the criminal justice system. The Farmer Review for Women (2019) makes recommendations for improving family ties across custody and the community. As set out in the Department's response to the JCHR report in the *Right to family life: children whose mothers are in prison*, we are committed to taking these recommendations forward to best effect and working with other Government Departments where needed.

The Review made proposals to examine and encourage partnership working between children's social care services and justice agencies, including a Case Review of the social work processes that have led to children being removed from primary carers when they entered prison to be carried out by the Chief Social Worker for England (Children and Families). We are working with the Chief Social Worker and officials from the Department for Education to scope and deliver this recommendation, the progress of which has been paused due to COVID-19. Similarly, we will liaise closely as we scope are scoping the delivery of the Review's recommendation for an on-site social worker to be part of the multi-disciplinary teams to act as a point of liaison with community-based children's social care services.

■ Prisoners' Release: Females

Alex Cunningham:

[\[43896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that secure accommodation is available for women released from prison.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[43897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect on women otherwise eligible for release from prison on a temporary license not being so released as a result of secure accommodation not being available during the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

In response to the current unprecedented situation, on 4 April the Government announced that risk-assessed prisoners who are within two months of their release date will be considered for temporary release from prison, under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme.

Prisoner releases are being phased over time to ensure stringent risk assessments can be carried out and that the required support for offenders is in place. No prisoner will be released without housing and health support being in place. All prisoners released under this scheme are eligible for an enhanced subsistence grant to reflect that these individuals will not have had the full amount of time and resources they would usually have had to prepare for release.

Additionally, pregnant women and prisoners living on mother and baby units will also be considered for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) on compassionate grounds during this period. Pregnant women and prisoners with babies in custody are being assessed case by case, and so the specific needs of each woman are considered before release is authorised.

Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPTs) have been established in each area of England and in Wales to address accommodation needs during these exceptional and extremely challenging times. There is also a strong link with voluntary sector providers to ensure that providers with accommodation are able to link with HPTs to ensure that they are aware of vacancies that are available.

Prison establishments and Through the Gate teams are actively engaging in ensuring that proposed release accommodation is appropriate for the needs of the women. Where a proposed address is assessed as unsuitable women are supported to find alternative accommodation via the HPTs.

Local Authorities continue to have a duty to try and prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless households under the Homelessness Reduction Act, irrespective of whether they are a family or single person, what has put them at risk, or if they have a local connection to the area.

Whilst our immediate concern is to support those individuals released from prison into suitable accommodation, in the long-term we will analyse the lessons learned during this period, to develop how we can improve the accommodation offer for those with a history of offending.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Maria Eagle:

[43597]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many benefit tribunals in (a) Liverpool, (b) the Northwest and (c) the UK have been postponed since March 2020.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available.

The latest period for which data about appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) are available is October – December 2019.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

Vicky Foxcroft:

[43706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) employment support allowance and (b) personal independence payment tribunals have been postponed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak since 16 March 2020.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not available.

The latest period for which data about appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) are available is October – December 2019.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is working hard to keep our justice system functioning during this unprecedented public health emergency. We are focusing on priority cases, changing working practices and introducing new procedures to minimise risks to the judiciary, staff and all those who use our courts and tribunals.

In line with government guidance, face to face hearings in the First-tier Tribunal SSCS have been replaced with telephone hearings and the use of other remote hearing technology to facilitate as many hearings as possible being held remotely. All parties to the hearings are being contacted directly to confirm new hearing arrangements.

In addition to holding remote hearings in all regions, appeals may also be decided by judges sitting alone in chambers, using the evidence before them in the case papers.

These changes to Tribunal practice are authorised by Practice Direction of the Senior President of Tribunals (effective 19 March 2020) and amendments to the relevant Tribunal procedure rules:

www.legislation.gov.uk/id/ukSI/2020/416

www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/General-Pilot-Practice-Direction-Final-For-Publication-CORRECTED-23032020.pdf

www.judiciary.uk/publications/pilot-practice-direction-panel-composition-in-the-first-tier-tribunal-and-the-upper-tribunal

The latest advice and guidance from the government and judiciary in relation to appeals within the Tribunal during the coronavirus pandemic is updated regularly and can be viewed using the following links:

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-courts-and-tribunals-planning-and-preparation

www.judiciary.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-guidance

Rushanara Ali:

[43909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the formula is for calculating the Department for Work and Pensions' contribution to the cost of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support).

Chris Philp:

Prime responsibility for the funding of the operation of what is now the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) transferred, along with funding from what is now the Department for Work and Pensions to what is now the Ministry of Justice on the creation of the Tribunals Service on 1 April 2006.

The contribution that the Department for Work and Pensions currently makes towards the costs of the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) covers the additional costs of that tribunal as a consequence of the introduction of the Personal Independence Payment benefit, which has led to an increase both in the number of

appeals to the tribunal and, due to the increased complexity of the tests involved, their length and cost.

The formula is based upon incremental costs for the increase in complexity and increase in volumes of cases coming through the system. The incremental costs are primarily judicial and staff costs to process and hear the cases. A fixed charge reflexing the increased complexity is levied for the baseline number of cases (70,687). All receipts and disposals above the baseline are charged based on the full incremental cost incurred.

Rushanara Ali:

[43911]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appeals against the disallowance of (a) employment and support allowance, (b) personal independence payment and (c) disability living allowance lapsed prior to the date of their hearing at the First Tier Tribunal in (a) 2018 and (b) 2019.

Chris Philp:

This information is not held centrally.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service keeps a statistical record of appeals according to the benefit, and underlying issue, in dispute. However, no issue type corresponds to 'disallowance'.

General information about appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

■ Universal Credit: Appeals

Rushanara Ali:

[43912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of universal credit data collected by the First Tier Tribunal (Social Security & Child Support) which relates to (a) limited capability for work, (b) right to reside and (c) other issues.

Chris Philp:

Universal Credit (UC) is a benefit made up of component parts, known as 'Elements'. An award of UC may comprise one or more Elements, depending on the circumstances of the claimant.

The Elements are:

- Standard allowance
- Child element
- Childcare costs
- Limited cap ability for work-related activity element (LCWRA)
- Carer element
- Housing costs element

For the period October to December 2019, the latest period for which data are available, LCWRA represented 66% of the Elements recorded against UC appeals.

Under each Element is a wide range of disputable issue types. The type of issue most closely corresponding to the category 'right to reside' is 'habitual residence test' (HRT).

As a proportion of the issues recorded under all Elements of all UC appeals, between October and December 2019, HRT was 7%, with issues other than HRT being 93%.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Chris Elmore:

[\[44009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that social distancing measures are implemented in aviation travel.

Kelly Tolhurst:

In line with the Prime Minister's announcement in relation to the next phase of the pandemic, the Department for Transport is looking to introduce new measures specific to the aviation sector as part of the Government's overall efforts.

Further, the Department is working closely with the aviation sector to co-produce agreed common standards on health measures that could be deployed throughout the aviation customer journey. These measures will help to restart the sector and provide passengers and staff with the confidence they need to start flying again. The Department is working internationally to aim to ensure any UK measures are recognised globally given the international nature of the sector.

■ British Airways: Coronavirus

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[43962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to engage with British Airways to help facilitate job retention in that company.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Chancellor has set out unprecedented support for workers of airline companies and Ministers and officials regularly meet with airline representatives to discuss the challenges they face and possible areas of support. 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 Covid Commercial Finance Facility 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.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus**Paul Maynard:** [\[43867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on classifying coach operators as leisure businesses for the purposes of covid-19 business support grants.

Paul Maynard: [\[43869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Government's support for coach operators during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has launched an unprecedented set of support measures to ensure that businesses, such as coach operators, have access to the funds they need to pay essential bills at this difficult time. This includes the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until the end of October. Officials are engaging with both MHCLG and HMT to understand what the ongoing risks and issues are for the coach sector, and how these could be addressed.

■ Cycling and Walking: Coronavirus**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[43764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to (a) monitor increases in (i) walking and (ii) cycling during the covid 19 outbreak and (b) develop a post-covid-19 sustainable transport strategy.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government recognises that walking and cycling have great potential as a means of enabling people to move around safely while maintaining social distancing, thus helping to relieve pressures on public transport as well as delivering other health benefits. We are already continually gathering evidence in order to monitor changes in cycling and walking levels.

The Government continues to keep its sustainable transport response under review. We recognise that reallocating road space to give pedestrians and cyclists more room can be a good way of enabling more people to use these modes safely. We support the steps many local authorities are taking to deliver this, but decisions on where and how to do it are a matter for local authorities who are responsible for managing their roads, and who already have the necessary powers. The Transport Secretary announced on 9 May a £250 million emergency active travel fund, to create new bike lanes, wider pavements and safer junctions in England.

■ Cycling: Commuters**Anthony Mangnall:** [\[44037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to further encourage cycling as a form of commuting.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On the 9th May the Government announced a £2bn package of funding for cycling and walking. This includes £250m which will encourage cycling to work through the provision of pop up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, safer junctions as well as vouchers for cycle repairs and greater provision for bike fixing facilities. This builds on the refreshed Cycle to Work Scheme Guidance published in 2019 which made it easier for employers to provide bicycles and equipment including e-bikes and adapted bikes worth over £1,000.

■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[43612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Government has to reinstate non-essential (a) vocational driving tests and (b) non-vocational car driving tests during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has suspended most driver testing, including vocational and non-vocational car tests, for up to three months to support the Government's efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19. The DVSA has a reduced workforce but will continue, as a major priority, to make tests available for those whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or who work in critical sectors such as health and social care.

The DVSA is continually evaluating the current situation and is working closely with key stakeholders from the car, motorcycle and vocational industries to establish how to begin resuming its service of providing driving tests. Before practical driving tests are reintroduced, the DVSA will inform the driver training industry. This will help candidates prepare and reach the standard of driving needed to pass their test.

The DVSA remains committed to resume testing as soon as it is safe to do so and in line with further Government advice.

■ Public Transport: Coronavirus**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[43765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that social distancing measures can be effectively introduced for regional public transport during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

On the 12 May, the Government published guidance for passengers and transport operators to help them keep themselves and their staff safe, including how social distancing rules should be interpreted to do this. This guidance will be kept up-to-date as restrictions on travel change.

Carla Lockhart:

[44065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that public transport vehicles are compatible with social distancing measures; and what support his Department will provide for required adaptations to achieve that compatibility.

Rachel Maclean:

On the 12 May, the Government published guidance for passengers and transport operators to help them keep themselves and their staff safe, including how social distancing rules should be interpreted to do this. This guidance will be kept up-to-date as restrictions on travel change.

TREASURY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme

Ronnie Cowan:

[43690]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure businesses who do not bank with a high street provider are able to apply for a Bounce Bank Loan.

John Glen:

Under the new Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), launched on 4 May, businesses can apply for a loan from £2,000 up to £50,000, capped at 25% of a firm's turnover. The Government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments charged to the business by the lender, and no repayments are due by the business during this period. The interest rate after the first 12-month period has been agreed between the Government and lenders at 2.5%, ensuring that the smallest businesses can access the finance they need in a matter of days.

There are 16 lenders that are offering loans under the scheme. More details on participating lenders can be found here: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-schemes/bounce-back-loans/current-accredited-lenders-and-partners/>

Any lender that wishes to become accredited to offer Bounce Back Loans should contact the British Business Bank, who administer the scheme.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Tulip Siddiq:

[43717]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether a company can rehire and place on furlough an employee whose contract came to a natural end during or before the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

An employee on a fixed term contract can be re-employed, furloughed and claimed for if either their contract expired after 28 February 2020 and an RTI payment

submission for the employee was notified to HMRC on or before 28 February 2020; or their contract expired after 19 March 2020 and an RTI payment submission for the employee was notified to HMRC on or before 19 March 2020. Employees that started and ended the same contract between 28 February 2020 and 19 March 2020 will not qualify for this scheme. Further details can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme.

Henry Smith:

[43879]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to support workers employed on or before 19 March 2020 who had not been added to their employer's payroll via RTI submission.

Rachael Maskell:

[43970]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will enable employers to notify HMRC of employees that started work in (a) February and (b) March 2020 but were not included in a real time information submission to HMRC before 19 March 2020 to enable employers to add their employees to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is open to any individual who was on an employer's PAYE payroll on or before 19 March 2020 and for whom HMRC received an RTI submission notifying payment in respect of that employee on or before the 19 March 2020. Processing claims for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme where HMRC did not have RTI data by 19 March would significantly slow down the system while risking substantial levels of fraud. It would also require greater resource for HMRC when they are already under significant pressure to deliver the system designed.

Those not eligible for the scheme may have access to other support which the Government is providing, including a package of temporary welfare measures and up to three months' mortgage payment holidays for those who may be in difficulty with mortgage payments.

Rushanara Ali:

[43926]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme have been refused.

Jesse Norman:

To be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme an employer must have furloughed employees for a minimum of 3 weeks, have a PAYE scheme registered on HMRC's real time information system for PAYE on 19 March 2020, be enrolled for PAYE online and have a UK bank account. If an employer is eligible a claim will be accepted.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[R] [\[43678\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Treasury Direction in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to enable directors who have furloughed themselves to undertake action beyond filing accounts.

Jesse Norman:

As noted in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme guidance, company directors are bound by the Companies Act 2006 to fulfil their statutory duties. The Government aims to ensure that salaried directors can be furloughed and supported through this scheme, while still being able to meet their statutory duties. The guidance is clear that furloughed directors should do no more work than would reasonably be judged necessary to meet their statutory requirements, and that they should not do work of a kind they would carry out in normal circumstances to generate commercial revenue or provide services to or on behalf of their company.

This scheme supplements the other significant support announced for UK businesses, including the Bounce Back Loans Scheme for small businesses, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the deferral of tax payments. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Mhairi Black:

[\[43680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide support for (a) PAYE zero hour contract workers, (b) casual workers and (c) seasonal workers who cannot access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is open to employees on any type of employment contract, including full-time, part-time, agency, fixed-term, flexible or zero hour contracts. As well as employees, other workers may also be eligible if they are paid via PAYE. To be eligible for the CJRS, employees must have been on their employer's PAYE payroll on or before 19 March 2020 and HMRC must have received an RTI submission notifying payment in respect of that employee on or before 19 March 2020. Full guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

Those not eligible for the scheme may have access to other support which the Government is providing, including a package of temporary welfare measures and up to three months' mortgage payment holidays for those who may be in difficulty with mortgage payments.

■ Food: Waste Disposal

Carolyn Harris: [\[43991\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether food and drink wholesalers are eligible to claim tax relief on food they dispose of as a result of it passing its use by or best before date as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Businesses include the costs of purchases, which depending on the trade may include perishable goods, in their calculation of trading profits and achieve tax relief in this way. This is regardless of whether the goods are sold or disposed of as a result of the trading conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Future Fund

Daisy Cooper: [\[45465\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to consult with stakeholders from the technology industry on the (a) eligibility criteria and (b) terms and conditions for access to the Future Fund.

Daisy Cooper: [\[45466\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the eligibility criteria for the Future Fund, announced on 20 April 2020, if he will publish further guidance on who qualifies as third-party private investors.

Daisy Cooper: [\[45467\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to review the Future Fund scheme.

Daisy Cooper: [\[45468\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish details on the number of companies that have (a) successfully applied and (b) been rejected for the Future Fund on a (i) weekly and (ii) monthly basis.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has sought industry feedback throughout the development of the Future Fund, including from representatives of the technology industry. Further guidance on terms and conditions and eligibility, including investor criteria, will be published shortly.

The Government will keep the Future Fund under ongoing review, and data will be published on applications on a weekly basis once launched.

■ Pensioners: Taxation

Nick Fletcher:

[44060]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that pensioners who are negatively affected by the marginal rate of income tax do not lose out during the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to ensuring that older people are able to live with the dignity and respect they deserve, and the State Pension is the foundation of state support for older people. The Government provides support for older people, such as Winter Fuel Payments, free eye tests and NHS prescriptions, and free bus passes.

Since 2010, the State Pension has been uprated by the highest of average earnings growth, price inflation or 2.5% - an approach known as the Triple Lock. The value of the State Pension is £1,903.20 a year higher than it was in 2010.

It is important to note that the personal allowance - the amount of income that each individual may receive before paying income tax - is currently set at a level high enough to ensure that those pensioners whose sole income is the new State Pension or basic State Pension do not pay any income tax.

The Government is committed to a fair tax system in which those with the most contribute the most. This is why the income tax system consists of three progressive rates of tax, which sit above an internationally high personal allowance.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Rushanara Ali:

[43927]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many applications for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme have been refused.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) claims service opened on 13 May 2020, ahead of schedule. Eligibility for SEISS is based on average trading profits for sole traders and income from partnerships. More information on the eligibility criteria can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

HMRC do not refuse applications for the scheme. People are either eligible to apply for SEISS and therefore given access to the service, or they are ineligible and not given access. Eligibility is based strictly on the criteria set by the Chancellor.

Figures relating to the number identified as potentially eligible, yet not claiming, are not available as this is not a HMRC decision. Once the scheme is closed, HMRC will be able to quantify how many of those identified as potentially eligible did not apply.

Those ineligible for SEISS may still benefit from other support. Individuals may have access to a range of grants and loans depending on their circumstances, and the

SEISS supplements the significant support already announced for UK businesses, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the deferral of tax payments. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/.

Rachael Maskell:

[43971]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the terms of the Self-Employed Income Support scheme to enable people that registered as self-employed with HMRC after 6 April 2019 to access that scheme.

Jesse Norman:

It has not been possible to include those who began trading after the 2018-19 tax year in the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). This was a very difficult decision and it was taken for practical reasons.

Unlike employee income, self-employed income is not reported monthly, but at the end of each tax year on the individual's Income Tax Self Assessment return. This means that the most reliable and up-to-date record of self-employed income is from 2018-19 tax returns, which were due at the end of January 2020.

The Government recognises that those who started trading more recently will not have submitted a tax return for the 2018-19 tax year, and it considered alternative approaches. However, HMRC would not be able to distinguish genuine self-employed individuals who started trading in 2019-20 from fake applications by fraudulent operators and organised criminal gangs seeking to exploit the SEISS.

Kate Osamor:

[44002]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to change the qualifying criteria for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The new Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will help those adversely affected by COVID-19. It means the UK will have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world. HMRC designed the SEISS using information they already held, in order to deliver it quickly and minimise the risk of fraud. Expanding the scope would have required HMRC to collect and verify new information. This would have taken longer to deliver and put at risk the other schemes which the Government is committed to delivering as quickly as possible. Some 95% of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment could benefit from this scheme. The scheme is targeted at those most in need, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

Those not eligible for the SEISS may still benefit from other support. Individuals may have access to a range of grants and loans depending on their circumstances, and the SEISS supplements the significant support already announced for UK businesses, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the

Bounce Back Loans Scheme, and the deferral of tax payments. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

Kate Osamor:

[\[44003\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme beyond August 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) allows eligible individuals to claim a taxable grant worth up to 80% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single installment covering three months, and capped at £7,500 in total. The Chancellor indicated that the SEISS would be temporary when he announced it at the end of March, and that it could be extended if necessary. The Government is keeping this under review.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Disability

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[43705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress she has made on the National Disability Strategy; and what the timeframe is for that strategy to be published.

Justin Tomlinson:

This remains a priority for the department, and we will plan the extensive stakeholder engagement once it is safe to do so.

■ Food Poverty

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[43939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect on household food insecurity of the introduction of the 10 new food security questions in the Family Resources Survey in 2019.

Will Quince:

The first results from the food insecurity questions added to the Family Resource Survey in April 2019 are due to be published in 2021.

The information that will be published will be dependent on the results being robust and meeting the quality assurance processes which all DWP statistical publications are subject to.

■ Housing Benefit: Coronavirus

Mike Amesbury:

[\[44031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of removing the cap on discretionary housing payments to enable local authorities to provide support to households affected by covid-19.

Will Quince:

We have already provided £180m in Discretionary Housing Payment(DHP) funding to Local Authorities to support vulnerable claimants with housing costs in the private and social rented sector in England and Wales for 2020/21. This includes an extra £40m as announced last year at the spending round.

In addition to the central government contribution, Local Authorities in England and Wales are able to top up DHP funding up to a maximum of two and a half times this figure using their own funds.

■ Independent Case Examiner

Rushanara Ali:

[\[43913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 January 2020 to Question 1734 on the Independent Case Examiner, what the average length of time taken was to (a) commence and (b) complete an investigation into a complaint against her Department between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2020.

Mims Davies:

The cases that reach the ICE Office are the most complex and investigations will not be compromised in order to be completed within certain timescales. Having accepted a complaint for examination, the ICE Office will initially try to broker a solution between the complainant and the relevant department or supplier, without having to request evidence to inform an investigation – this is known as “resolution”. If it’s not possible to resolve the complaint, the evidence will be requested and the case will await allocation to an Investigation Case Manager (ICM). Complainants are kept updated on the progression of their complaint and the vast majority are satisfied with the service they receive.

During the period 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2020, it took the Independent Case Examiner’s Office an average of: 62 weeks to commence an investigation (from the point at which the complaint was accepted for examination); and 18 weeks to complete an investigation (from the point at which it was allocated to an ICM).

The Independent Case Examiner’s Office began the process of recruiting additional ICMs, to help it reduce the time complaints wait to be brought into investigation, prior to the introduction of the Coronavirus lockdown measures. That process will recommence as soon as it is practicable to do so.

■ Pensions: Coronavirus**Caroline Lucas:****[43871]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Written Statement of 27 April 2020, HCWS200 on Pensions: Response to covid-19, how the 27,000 pensioners contacted were identified; whether her Department has been able to identify all those people likely to need help because they usually collect their pension in cash; and if she will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

The Secretary of State has already made a personal statement to the House of Commons, and answered dozens of questions, which included contact with POCA and shielded customers, on 4 May 2020, following the Written Ministerial Statement by the Minister for Pensions tabled on the 27 April 2020.

Individuals in England who are in the shielded cohort, and who hold Post Office card accounts, will have received a call from the National Shielding Service. If this identified a potential concern over access to payments, the individual was transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions. In most cases that conversation could resolve concerns by use of processes such as changing method of payment. Where this did not happen the individual was called by a Department for Work and Pensions Visiting Officer, who would ensure the concern was resolved, in exceptional cases arranging for delivery of cash to the customer.

Where the Post Office was in conversation with a customer who fell into the above categories they passed that customer's details to the Department for Work and Pensions for a call. The Post Office can, and has, also arranged for the delivery of cash to individuals via the Royal Mail Special Delivery Service.

In addition to the process outlined above, the Department for Work and Pensions is arranging for all customers in the above categories who are living alone to receive contact from a Visiting Officer or their local authority.

Shielding Post Office card account customers were identified by matching National Shielding Service data with that of the Department for Work and Pensions. Beyond National Shielding Service Post Office card account customers, any other customer may experience concerns about accessing their payments. Should any customers have concerns over access to their payments, they are advised and able to contact the DWP helplines (08007310469), or the Post Office helpline (03457223344) in the case of Post Office card account customers. There are a range of existing processes that can be used to address those concerns

■ Reconstruction: Coronavirus**Seema Malhotra:****[43937]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with trade union leaders on establishing a national council for reconstruction and recovery.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: The Government published guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible. This was developed with input from a wide range of businesses, Trade Unions and representative organisations, as well as Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive, and was led by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is continuing to work with unions on developing sensible guidance for businesses that gives UK workers the utmost confidence they can now return to work safely. The Government will of course consider any new suggestions carefully.

■ Social Security Benefits**Kate Osamor:**[\[43083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral evidence of the Permanent Secretary to the Work and Pensions Committee on the DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak on 25 March 2020, Q33, HC 178, if she will estimate the length of time it would take her Department to implement a £20 a week uplift of benefit payments to claimants of (a) job seekers allowance, (b) employment support allowance and (c) income support.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 13 May 2020]: DWP have no plans to uplift Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**Rushanara Ali:**[\[43918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to review the policy of benefit sanctions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

We are focused on the processing of claims and will not be checking conditionality compliance regarding preparing for, looking for and being available for work until the end of June. This means that claimants won't receive any new sanctions if they are unable to meet these commitments during this period. We continue to review our policies as the situation evolves.

■ Social Security Benefits: Telephone Services**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[43992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he has taken to ensure that benefits helplines are fully accessible to people with physical and learning disabilities.

Justin Tomlinson:

If customers have difficulties using the phone, they can use the following services:

- Relay UK which is a national service provided by BT that helps people with hearing and speech difficulties communicate with people over the phone. This can be used to contact all of our benefit and pension services.
- Textphone which is available for all benefits and pensions services. The textphone number is given with the other contact details in benefits and pensions guides.
- Video Relay Service (VRS) which is available to customers claiming Universal Credit, in disability benefits and Access to Work. By October we will further extend VRS into all DWP services. VRS enables British Sign Language (BSL) users to contact DWP via a BSL interpreter. The customer uses a video link accessed through their own computer, smartphone or tablet. The interpreter will then speak to a DWP agent relaying the conversation by phone. There is no need for anyone to be in the same location and the customer does not have to book the service in advance. This means that the customer and DWP agent can have a telephone conversation in real time.

If customers cannot use these, they can ask for:

- communication by email –if they tell us this is because of their disability or health condition.
- support from a family member, a friend or someone else such as a welfare rights adviser – as long as they have the customer’s permission to help them.
- a home visit.

■ Unemployment: Training

Sir Christopher Chope:

[42898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to enable unemployed people to access training to work as (a) customs agents, (b) seasonal agricultural workers, and (c) other shortage occupations; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Department for Work and Pensions is engaging cross-government to understand supply and demand across the labour market throughout and beyond the COVID-19 emergency. As part of this, we continue to work with departments responsible for key sectors to develop clear cross-government messaging on how people can enter work safely in critical sectors and support the nation’s response to COVID-19.

We have also developed two new websites, Job Help and Employer Help, which provide a range of helpful advice about finding work, including how transferrable skills can open up opportunities in critical sectors. The Government is directing all jobseeker and employer enquiries, regarding recruitment needs, to Find a Job, the Government’s job-matching service.

By ensuring those seeking work and employers with vacancies use Find a Job, DWP will be able to better match people to jobs. There are currently 1.7m registered users

and around 145,000 registered employers on the site. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the department has worked to boost the number of vacancies on the site and promote key sectors that are recruiting to meet the challenges they are currently facing.

This approach has also been communicated to Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and sector bodies as a mechanism to match people with vacancies, including agricultural seasonal work and other shortage occupations such as adult social care.

■ Universal Credit: Telephone Services

Hywel Williams:

[43840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the opening times of the universal credit helpline have changed; and if she will ensure that the (a) UK Government and (b) universal credit websites are updated with the new information.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: Since the start of the pandemic, we have received unprecedented levels of claims for Universal Credit. This was accompanied by a significant increase in call volumes which was impacting our ability to support customers, particularly those making new claims.

To enable our people to pay customers their benefit, we implemented a temporary pause to the handling of general queries through the telephony service at the beginning and end of the day. The purpose of this change was to allow case managers to focus on progressing claims during these times.

New claim appointments and new claims by phone remained open as usual.

At the moment, people making new claims for Universal Credit do not in fact need to call the Department as part of the process and we have communicated that widely. Once they have completed their online application we will call them if we need to check any of the information they have given us.

The Universal Credit helpline returned to our normal operating hours from 11 May (8am-6pm, Monday to Friday).