



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 2 June 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:41 P.M., 02 June 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

### CONTENTS

|  |          |   |    |
|--|----------|---|----|
| <b>ANSWERS</b>                                       | <b>8</b> | ■ Poverty   | 20 |
| ATTORNEY GENERAL                                     | 8        | ■ Public Holidays                                   | 21 |
| ■ Criminal Proceedings:<br>Disclosure of Information | 8        | ■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus                         | 21 |
| ■ Remand in Custody                                  | 8        | ■ Small Businesses: EU Grants<br>and Loans          | 22 |
| BUSINESS, ENERGY AND<br>INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY          | 9        | CABINET OFFICE                                      | 22 |
| ■ Arlington Automotive:<br>Insolvency                | 9        | ■ Borders: Northern Ireland                         | 22 |
| ■ Cars and Caravans: Sales                           | 9        | ■ Cabinet Office:<br>Correspondence                 | 23 |
| ■ Citizens Advice: Coronavirus                       | 10       | ■ Cabinet Office: Directors                         | 23 |
| ■ Coal: Concessions                                  | 10       | ■ Care Homes: Redbridge                             | 24 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention<br>Scheme                | 15       | ■ Civil Servants: Coronavirus                       | 24 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention<br>Scheme: Construction  | 16       | ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control                      | 25 |
| ■ Employment Schemes: Young<br>People                | 16       | ■ Government Departments:<br>Coronavirus            | 25 |
| ■ Horticulture: Government<br>Assistance             | 17       | ■ Inflation: Coronavirus                            | 26 |
| ■ Hospitality Industry:<br>Government Assistance     | 18       | ■ Joint Ministerial Committee On<br>EU Negotiations | 26 |
| ■ Industrial Health and Safety:<br>Coronavirus       | 18       | ■ Marriage: Coronavirus                             | 27 |
| ■ Post Office: Subsidies                             | 19       | ■ Ministerial Responsibility                        | 27 |
| ■ Postgraduate Education:<br>Coronavirus             | 20       | ■ Prime Minister: Consultants                       | 27 |
|  |          | ■ UK Relations With EU                              | 27 |
|  |          | ■ UK Trade With EU                                  | 28 |
|  |          | ■ Visas: EU Countries                               | 28 |

|   |    |  |    |
|---|----|--|----|
| DEFENCE   | 28 | ■ Educational Institutions and Social Services: Inspections  | 48 |
| ■ Armed Forces: Pay   | 28 | ■ Educational Institutions: Computer Software and Technology | 49 |
| ■ Defence: Procurement                                      | 29 | ■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus                      | 50 |
| ■ HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Queen Elizabeth: Shipbuilding | 30 | ■ Educational Institutions: Finance                          | 51 |
| ■ Type 23 Frigates  | 30 | ■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes                         | 51 |
| ■ Veterans: Commonwealth                                    | 31 | ■ Higher Education: Students                                 | 52 |
| DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT                           | 32 | ■ Home Education   | 53 |
| ■ Catering  | 32 | ■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus                          | 54 |
| ■ Charities: Coronavirus                                    | 32 | ■ Private Education: Coronavirus                             | 55 |
| ■ Charities: Staff  | 34 | ■ Pupils: Coronavirus  | 56 |
| ■ Disinformation: Coronavirus                               | 34 | ■ Schools: Attendance  | 56 |
| ■ Easyjet: Disclosure of Information                        | 35 | ■ Schools: Coronavirus                                       | 56 |
| ■ Greyhound Racing: Coronavirus                             | 36 | ■ Schools: Protective Clothing                               | 60 |
| ■ National Lottery: Finance                                 | 36 | ■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus                     | 60 |
| ■ Public Libraries: Coronavirus                             | 37 | ■ Students: Coronavirus                                      | 61 |
| ■ Shops: Coronavirus  | 37 | ■ Students: Housing  | 62 |
| ■ Social Media: Disinformation                              | 38 | ■ Teachers: Coronavirus                                      | 63 |
| ■ Sports: Coronavirus                                       | 38 | ■ Universities: Coronavirus                                  | 64 |
| ■ Voluntary Organisations                                   | 39 | ■ Young People: Health                                       | 64 |
| ■ Voluntary Organisations: Finance                          | 39 | ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS                          | 65 |
| EDUCATION   | 42 | ■ Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland                    | 65 |
| ■ Apprentices: Coronavirus                                  | 42 | ■ Agriculture: Finance                                       | 66 |
| ■ Care Homes: Inspections                                   | 42 | ■ Agriculture: Trade Competitiveness                         | 67 |
| ■ Children in Care: Coronavirus                             | 43 | ■ Animal Products and Food: Northern Ireland                 | 68 |
| ■ Children: Bereavement Counselling                         | 44 |  |    |
| ■ Children: Day Care  | 44 |  |    |
| ■ Children: Food  | 46 |  |    |
| ■ Children: Social Services                                 | 46 |  |    |

|  |    |  |    |
|--|----|--|----|
| ■ Animals: Imports                                     | 68 | ■ Vepa Matyakubov                                      | 85 |
| ■ Boats: Coronavirus                                   | 69 | HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE                                 | 85 |
| ■ Food: Origin Marking                                 | 70 | ■ Cancer: Rotherham                                    | 85 |
| ■ Horticulture: Coronavirus                            | 70 | ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus                              | 86 |
| ■ Inland Waterways: Coronavirus                        | 71 | ■ Care Homes: Hospitals                                | 87 |
| ■ Supermarkets: Coronavirus                            | 71 | ■ Care Homes: Standards                                | 87 |
| ■ Zoos: Coronavirus                                    | 72 | ■ Coronavirus: Babies                                  | 87 |
| FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE                        | 72 | ■ Coronavirus: Charities                               | 88 |
| ■ Bahrain: Coronavirus                                 | 72 | ■ Coronavirus: Computer Software                       | 88 |
| ■ British Embassy Tehran                               | 73 | ■ Coronavirus: Death                                   | 90 |
| ■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus                | 73 | ■ Coronavirus: Death Certificates                      | 90 |
| ■ British Overseas Territories: Marine Protected Areas | 75 | ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control                         | 91 |
| ■ Crimes against Humanity: Victims                     | 75 | ■ Coronavirus: Eating Disorders                        | 91 |
| ■ Croatia: Asylum                                      | 76 | ■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups                           | 92 |
| ■ Emergency Powers: Coronavirus                        | 76 | ■ Coronavirus: Screening                               | 92 |
| ■ Grenada: Coronavirus                                 | 77 | ■ Coronavirus: Tyne and Wear                           | 93 |
| ■ India: Coronavirus                                   | 78 | ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Consultants    | 93 |
| ■ Iran: Detainees                                      | 79 | ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence | 93 |
| ■ Israel: West Bank                                    | 79 | ■ Eating Disorders: Coronavirus                        | 94 |
| ■ Jamaica: Coronavirus                                 | 80 | ■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus                           | 94 |
| ■ Kashmir: Politics and Government                     | 80 | ■ Ethnic Groups: Maternity Services                    | 95 |
| ■ Members: Correspondence                              | 81 | ■ Health Services: Immigrants                          | 95 |
| ■ Mubarak Bala   | 81 | ■ Maternity Services: Negligence                       | 96 |
| ■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe                            | 82 | ■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People    | 96 |
| ■ Overseas Workers                                     | 82 | ■ Mental Health Services: Prisons                      | 97 |
| ■ Punjab: Coronavirus                                  | 82 | ■ NHS: Computer Software                               | 97 |
| ■ South Asia: Coronavirus                              | 83 | ■ NHS: Conditions of Employment                        | 99 |
| ■ Venezuela: Coronavirus                               | 84 |  |    |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| ■ NHS: Voluntary Work                    | 99  |
| ■ Palantir: Contracts                    | 99  |
| ■ Palantir: Data Protection              | 100 |
| ■ Protective Clothing: Procurement       | 100 |
| ■ Social Services: Fees and Charges      | 101 |
| ■ Vitamin D: Coronavirus                 | 101 |
| HOME OFFICE                              | 101 |
| ■ Asylum: Finance                        | 101 |
| ■ Aviation                               | 102 |
| ■ Biometric Residence Permits            | 103 |
| ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments           | 103 |
| ■ Domestic Abuse: Males                  | 104 |
| ■ Home Office: Overseas Aid              | 105 |
| ■ Home Office: Written Questions         | 105 |
| ■ Human Trafficking: Children            | 106 |
| ■ Human Trafficking: Victims             | 106 |
| ■ Immigrants                             | 107 |
| ■ Immigrants: Health Services            | 107 |
| ■ Immigration                            | 107 |
| ■ Members: Correspondence                | 108 |
| ■ Migrant Workers: NHS                   | 108 |
| ■ Passengers                             | 108 |
| ■ Police: Protective Clothing            | 109 |
| ■ Royal Family: Security                 | 109 |
| ■ Slavery                                | 109 |
| ■ Social Distancing: Enforcement         | 110 |
| ■ UK Border Force: Coronavirus           | 110 |
| ■ Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre | 110 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION                                | 111 |
| ■ Parliament: Coronavirus                                  | 111 |
| HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT                  | 111 |
| ■ Charities: Finance                                       | 111 |
| ■ Cladding: Fire Prevention                                | 112 |
| ■ Coronavirus: Local Government Finance                    | 112 |
| ■ Council Tax Benefits                                     | 113 |
| ■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Greater London            | 113 |
| ■ Evictions  | 113 |
| ■ High Rise Flats: Insurance                               | 114 |
| ■ Local Council Tax Support Schemes Independent Review     | 114 |
| ■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus                    | 115 |
| ■ Planning Permission: Coronavirus                         | 116 |
| ■ Religious Buildings: Coronavirus                         | 117 |
| ■ Religious Freedom: Employment                            | 117 |
| ■ Rents: Arrears   | 118 |
| ■ Repossession Orders: Coronavirus                         | 118 |
| ■ Uk Shared Prosperity Fund                                | 119 |
| INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT                                  | 120 |
| ■ Bangladesh: Rohingya                                     | 120 |
| ■ CDC: Burma   | 120 |
| ■ Commonwealth Veterans' Programme                         | 122 |
| ■ Department for International Development: Correspondence | 122 |

|   |     |  |     |
|---|-----|--|-----|
| ■ Developing Countries:<br>Coronavirus                  | 123 | SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON<br>THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION | 141 |
| ■ Education: Females                                    | 124 | ■ Election Offences:<br>Prosecutions               | 141 |
| ■ Global Partnership for<br>Education: Overseas Aid     | 124 | TRANSPORT  | 142 |
| ■ Nutrition: Finance                                    | 125 | ■ Airports: Coronavirus                            | 142 |
| ■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus                             | 125 | ■ Aviation: Coronavirus                            | 142 |
| ■ Public Health: Coronavirus                            | 125 | ■ British Airways: Coronavirus                     | 142 |
| ■ Veterans: Poverty                                     | 126 | ■ British Nationals Abroad:<br>Coronavirus         | 143 |
| INTERNATIONAL TRADE                                     | 127 | ■ Bus Services: Coronavirus                        | 143 |
| ■ Department for International<br>Trade: Correspondence | 127 | ■ Commuters  | 144 |
| ■ Drugs: Trade Agreements                               | 127 | ■ Cycling and Electric Scooters:<br>Coronavirus    | 144 |
| ■ NHS: Trade Agreements                                 | 127 | ■ Heathrow Airport: Coronavirus                    | 144 |
| ■ Overseas Trade: Economic<br>Situation                 | 128 | ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line                        | 145 |
| ■ Trade Agreements                                      | 128 | ■ High Speed 2 Railway Line:<br>Chalfont St Giles  | 145 |
| ■ Trade Agreements: Arbitration                         | 129 | ■ High Speed Two: Incentives                       | 146 |
| ■ Trade Agreements: Turkey                              | 129 | ■ High Speed Two: Pay                              | 146 |
| ■ UK Trade With EU                                      | 130 | ■ International Transport:<br>Coronavirus          | 147 |
| JUSTICE   | 130 | ■ Motorcycles: Coronavirus                         | 147 |
| ■ Courts: Coronavirus                                   | 130 | ■ Motorcycles: Training                            | 148 |
| ■ Debts: Coronavirus                                    | 131 | ■ Railways: Coronavirus                            | 148 |
| ■ Hate Crime  | 132 | ■ Railways: Devon                                  | 149 |
| ■ Prisoners' Release                                    | 132 | ■ Railways: Kingston upon<br>Thames                | 149 |
| ■ Prisons: Coronavirus                                  | 133 | ■ Rolling Stock: Coronavirus                       | 150 |
| LEADER OF THE HOUSE                                     | 139 | ■ Transport: Coronavirus                           | 151 |
| ■ House of Commons:<br>Coronavirus                      | 139 | TREASURY   | 151 |
| NORTHERN IRELAND  | 139 | ■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme:<br>Aberdeen             | 151 |
| ■ Exports: Northern Ireland                             | 139 | ■ Charities: Coronavirus                           | 152 |
| ■ Northern Ireland Office:<br>Correspondence            | 140 | ■ Charities: Finance                               | 154 |
| ■ Trade: Northern Ireland                               | 140 |  |     |

|   |     |   |     |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| ■ City Region Deals: West of England                      | 155 | ■ Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund            | 168 |
| ■ Community Development Finance Institutions: Coronavirus | 155 | ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme                 | 169 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme                        | 156 | ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Greater London | 171 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Charities             | 159 | ■ Shipping: Coronavirus                                 | 171 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Public Sector         | 160 | ■ Solicitors: Business Premises                         | 172 |
| ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Sole Traders          | 160 | ■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus                       | 172 |
| ■ Council Tax: Coronavirus                                | 160 | ■ Students: Coronavirus                                 | 173 |
| ■ Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility                   | 161 | ■ Tenants: Coronavirus                                  | 173 |
| ■ Directors: Coronavirus                                  | 161 | ■ Transport for London: Coronavirus                     | 174 |
| ■ Economics of Biodiversity Review                        | 162 | ■ Treasury: Correspondence                              | 174 |
| ■ Financial Services: Codes of Practice                   | 162 | ■ VAT   | 174 |
| ■ Future Fund   | 163 | WORK AND PENSIONS                                       | 175 |
| ■ Government Assistance: Coronavirus                      | 163 | ■ Children: Maintenance                                 | 175 |
| ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus                       | 163 | ■ Health and Safety Executive                           | 175 |
| ■ Inheritance Tax: Coronavirus                            | 165 | ■ Health and Safety Executive: Finance                  | 177 |
| ■ Members: Correspondence                                 | 165 | ■ Housing Benefit                                       | 177 |
| ■ Multinational Companies: Government Assistance          | 166 | ■ Housing Benefit: Coronavirus                          | 178 |
| ■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus                         | 166 | ■ Industrial Health and Safety                          | 178 |
| ■ Personal Income: Coronavirus                            | 166 | ■ Occupational Pensions: Coronavirus                    | 179 |
| ■ Post Office Card Account                                | 167 | ■ Pensioners: Income                                    | 180 |
| ■ Public Expenditure: Coronavirus                         | 168 | ■ Restart Programme: Young People                       | 180 |
|   |     | ■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus                 | 180 |
|   |     | ■ State Retirement Pensions: Coronavirus                | 181 |
|   |     | ■ Unemployment: Coronavirus                             | 181 |
|   |     | ■ Unemployment: Coronavirus                             | 182 |

|   |            |   |     |
|---|------------|---|-----|
| ■ Universal Credit  | 182        | EDUCATION   | 189 |
| ■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus   | 183        | ■ Education Update  | 189 |
| ■ Universal Credit: Students  | 184        | ■ Higher Education stabilisation package draft Regulations  | 190 |
| ■ Work Capability Assessments: Coronavirus  | 185        | HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  | 191 |
| <b>MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS</b>  | <b>186</b> | ■ NHS Test and Trace Update   | 191 |
| HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  | 186        | ■ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendments) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 | 192 |
| ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus   | 186        | HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT   | 193 |
| HOME OFFICE   | 186        | ■ Grenfell Update   | 193 |
| ■ Home Office: Chief Scientific Advisers  | 186        | JUSTICE   | 196 |
| <b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>   | <b>188</b> | ■ Prison National Framework and Probation Roadmap to Recovery                                       | 196 |
| DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT   | 188        | PARLIAMENTARY WORKS SPONSOR BODY  | 197 |
| ■ Reporting contingent liabilities in relation to a Government guarantee backing a previously approved £4 million borrowing facility and a new partially guaranteed borrowing facility of up to an additional £26 million for Historic Royal Palaces. | 188        | ■ Documents required by the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019              | 197 |

**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

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ Criminal Proceedings: Disclosure of Information

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

[\[48932\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether the oral contribution of the Solicitor General of 22 May 2019, Official Report, column 370 WH, on there being no corresponding legal duty on the defence to disclose information that is harmful to its case was a reference to the potential harm such disclosure might do to an application that a defendant makes for an order to stay the criminal proceeding against them.

**Suella Braverman:**

There is no duty on the defence to disclose any material or information that may undermine their case in the criminal justice system, including in relation to any application they may make. This is consistent with the fundamental principle that it is for the prosecution to prove its case and not for a defendant to prove their innocence.

All solicitors and barristers are however bound by professional codes of conduct, which include the duty to act with integrity at all times and to uphold the proper administration of justice. The Criminal Procedure Rules and judicial case management are also in place to ensure that any application for a stay of proceedings is fair, both to the prosecution and the defence.

#### ■ Remand in Custody

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[48995\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, on how many occasions the Director of Public Prosecutions was informed of a failure to comply with custody time limits in April 2020.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Director of Public Prosecutions is only informed of a custody time limit failure if it is deemed to be the responsibility of the CPS following review of the case. In April 2020, the Director of Public Prosecutions was informed of one custody time limit failure. This failure occurred in December 2019.

The CPS has made efforts to prioritise cases with a custody time limit during the pandemic, including via the interim charging protocol effective from 1 April.



**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY****■ Arlington Automotive: Insolvency****Jess Phillips:**[\[49710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for disabled employees of Arlington Automotive following the insolvency of that company and resulting job losses.

**Paul Scully:**

Three companies in the Arlington Group entered administration on 7 May 2020. When any company becomes insolvent and redundancies are made, it is undoubtedly a distressing time for the company's employees and workers and my officials at the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service are ensuring that relevant payments are made. Former employees of the Arlington Group can claim redundancy payments and other contractual amounts (subject to statutory limits) such as unpaid wages, notice pay and outstanding holiday pay from the National Insurance Fund.

BEIS officials are working closely with the administrators to identify and offer support to ensure that employees who may require assistance because of a disability, are helped to submit claims so that they can be paid as soon as possible. I also understand that officials in the Solihull Jobcentre have been supporting affected employees by providing help and explaining the support that is available through Jobcentre plus.

**■ Cars and Caravans: Sales****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[48662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's timescale is for re-opening (a) car and (b) motorhome and caravan showrooms as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are reduced.

**Paul Scully:**

On 11th May the Government published its COVID-19 recovery strategy, which sets out a roadmap to a phased recovery. This included the setting up of five ministerial-led taskforces. The taskforces will help oversee the development of guidance for reopening businesses, to ensure they can operate in a safe way for employees and customers, as long as the evidence shows it is safe to do so.

In step two of the roadmap, the Government has considered the reopening of non-essential retail. Updated guidance for shops and branches was published on 25 May after consultation with businesses, unions leaders, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. The updated guidance takes into account the best practice demonstrated by the many retailers which have been allowed to remain open and have applied social distancing measures in store.

Showrooms are now able to reopen from 1 June as long as they can adhere to the social distancing guidelines.

## ■ Citizens Advice: Coronavirus

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[49861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) Citizens Advice and (B) local branches of that organisation are able to access funding announced for charities due to the covid-19 outbreak in April 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, the national charities, will receive additional funding from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) fund announced on 8 April. Both conduct vital work to support individuals manage the covid-19 outbreak, particularly by helping them find appropriate support. The additional funding will reflect this.

On 20 May, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that £200 million from the VCSE fund will be allocated for local charities to be administered by the National Lottery Community Fund. As local Citizens Advice are all individual charities, and not funded by central government, they will have the opportunity to apply to that funding pot where they meet the objectives.

## ■ Coal: Concessions

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[48658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people in each (a) parliamentary constituency and (b) local authority area receive payments from the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Department does not hold information by Parliamentary constituency as the entitlement management database used by the Department's contractor does not hold beneficiary information in this format as it is not required for operational delivery of the scheme.

Below is a table of concessionary scheme numbers by Postcode Area:

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| AB            | 13                              |
| AL            | 4                               |
| B             | 276                             |
| BA            | 15                              |
| BB            | 38                              |
| BD            | 22                              |

---

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| BH            | 18                              |
| BL            | 72                              |
| BN            | 5                               |
| BR            | 2                               |
| BS            | 9                               |
| BT            | 4                               |
| CA            | 146                             |
| CB            | 10                              |
| CF            | 2549                            |
| CH            | 85                              |
| CM            | 4                               |
| CO            | 4                               |
| CR            | 1                               |
| CT            | 274                             |
| CV            | 596                             |
| CW            | 53                              |
| DA            | 2                               |
| DD            | 3                               |
| DE            | 1585                            |
| DG            | 51                              |
| DH            | 1347                            |
| DL            | 219                             |
| DN            | 2587                            |
| DT            | 10                              |
| DY            | 14                              |
| EG            | 1                               |

---

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| EH            | 741                             |
| EN            | 1                               |
| EX            | 19                              |
| FK            | 234                             |
| FY            | 35                              |
| G             | 99                              |
| GL            | 17                              |
| GU            | 5                               |
| HD            | 104                             |
| HG            | 15                              |
| HP            | 3                               |
| HR            | 10                              |
| HU            | 31                              |
| HX            | 4                               |
| IG            | 1                               |
| IM            | 9                               |
| IP            | 9                               |
| IV            | 19                              |
| KA            | 517                             |
| KT            | 7                               |
| KW            | 8                               |
| KY            | 720                             |
| L             | 42                              |
| LA            | 11                              |
| LD            | 7                               |
| LE            | 750                             |

---

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| LL            | 243                             |
| LN            | 83                              |
| LS            | 428                             |
| LU            | 1                               |
| M             | 170                             |
| ME            | 2                               |
| MK            | 7                               |
| ML            | 121                             |
| N             | 1                               |
| ND            | 1                               |
| NE            | 2004                            |
| NF            | 1                               |
| NG            | 5730                            |
| NN            | 15                              |
| NP            | 961                             |
| NR            | 31                              |
| NW            | 1                               |
| OL            | 20                              |
| OX            | 11                              |
| PA            | 5                               |
| PE            | 110                             |
| PH            | 8                               |
| PL            | 16                              |
| PO            | 19                              |
| PR            | 72                              |
| RG            | 11                              |

---

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| RH            | 5                               |
| S             | 6732                            |
| SA            | 1254                            |
| SE            | 2                               |
| SG            | 6                               |
| SK            | 15                              |
| SL            | 6                               |
| SN            | 8                               |
| SO            | 5                               |
| SP            | 5                               |
| SR            | 1321                            |
| SS            | 2                               |
| ST            | 1071                            |
| SW            | 2                               |
| SY            | 28                              |
| TA            | 12                              |
| TD            | 28                              |
| TF            | 59                              |
| TN            | 12                              |
| TQ            | 14                              |
| TR            | 17                              |
| TS            | 268                             |
| TW            | 1                               |
| UB            | 1                               |
| W             | 2                               |
| WA            | 376                             |

| POSTCODE AREA | TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCESSIONAIRES |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| WD            | 2                               |
| WF            | 2921                            |
| WN            | 491                             |
| WR            | 14                              |
| WS            | 709                             |
| WV            | 37                              |
| YO            | 434                             |

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[48659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much (a) coal and (b) cash in lieu a person receives if that person opts for money rather than coal from the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Of the total of C40,000 current beneficiaries under the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme at 31 March 2020, 34,800 have opted for the cash alternative at an average cost per beneficiary of £779 per annum; the average annual cost of solid fuel for the remaining 5,200 is £1,147 per beneficiary excluding delivery costs and VAT.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[48660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the cost to the public purse is of the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

In 2019/20 the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme outturn was c.£36.6m including administrative cost.

The scheme is forecast to run to 2062 with a total cost of c.£326m.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[48956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with so-called umbrella employment companies about waiving the obligation to fund the additional 12 per cent entitlement to holiday pay, to enable contractors of those companies to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Paul Scully:**

The Department has talked to a number of different groups and organisations in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), including representatives of umbrella companies.

Employment rights remain unchanged under the CJRS. Therefore, all workers' right to holiday accrues to the extent and in the same way it did prior to being placed on to furlough under the CJRS, as provided by the individual's statutory and contractual rights.

Employers are able to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grant to cover wages paid to their workers, up to 80% of the worker's usual pay. This includes payments made to a worker on annual leave, but where holiday pay owed exceeds the amount in the grant, the employer is required to make up the difference.

Further guidance to help employers manage holiday pay during Coronavirus is available on gov.uk.

### ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Construction

**Owen Thompson:**

[48540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is suitable for construction companies operating under the (a) JCT and (b) NEC form of contract.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is designed to help employers severely affected by Coronavirus, including construction companies, so they can retain their employees and protect the UK economy. All employers can claim under the CJRS for eligible employees. The forms of contract that a construction company enter into do not impact their eligibility to claim.

**Owen Thompson:**

[48541]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of taking steps to support construction companies operating under (a) JCT and (b) NEC forms of contract during the initial months after the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased and workers are taken off furlough.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The construction sector will be a key part of our economic recovery. The Government continues to work closely with the sector to ensure that it is in a position to support.

The Government has also worked with construction firms to develop guidance on safer working on construction sites, to enable them to reopen safely as soon as possible. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

### ■ Employment Schemes: Young People

**Liam Byrne:**

[48953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to announce that flexibility will be agreed to the European Structural Fund



conditions for the unspent portion of Birmingham City Council's £42 million project Youth Promise Plus programme to allow (a) easement of targets to reflect levels of employment opportunities and training provision available, (b) the ability to expend funds on welfare and crisis response and (c) the potential to use existing projects to support young people at risk of being not in employment, education or training.

**Paul Scully:**

The European Social Fund (ESF) Managing Authority recognises the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and how this may significantly impact on an organisation's ability to deliver against agreed targets. Officials are working with project leaders to understand this impact and will discuss this with them on a case by case basis.

The European Structural and Investment Funds Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response was announced via Action Note 047/20 on 26 March 2020, with a Question and Answer document published on gov.uk. The detail within these announcements highlights how the Managing Authority has the ability to consider requests from existing projects to refocus their funding provision to respond directly to local challenges caused by COVID-19.

The Government fully recognises the potential impact of the current situation on young people and is considering the gains which could be achieved from increasing the scope of existing projects aimed at supporting young people who may be at risk of becoming not in employment, education or training.

■ **Horticulture: Government Assistance**

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[49856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 5 May 2020 to Question 40489, on Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, if his Department will extend the repayment terms of Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme for growers in the seasonal ornamental horticulture sector with small profit margins who are unable to repay a loan from that scheme or the Bounce Back Loan scheme within six years.

**Paul Scully:**

While we continue to keep the schemes under review, there are currently no plans to amend the maximum term of a CBILS or BBLS facility.

Businesses in the horticultural sector benefit from the full interest and fee payment under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), as the Government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments and any facility arrangement fees charged by lenders. This is called the Business Interruption Payment.

Under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS), the Government will cover the first 12 months of interest payments and fees charged to the business by the lender. This is called the Business Interruption Payment. There will be an affordable flat rate of 2.5%

interest thereafter. In addition, loans under the BBLS do not require repayments to be made in the first 12 months.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Government Assistance

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[49686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to businesses that provide meeting and event spaces and who have been affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

We are aware that the business events industry has been significantly impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. The Government has engaged regularly with the sector over the last few months to continuously assess the situation.

Overall, Government has introduced a range of support for businesses across all sectors in the UK. At this time:

- 8.4 million jobs have been furloughed with £15 billion claimed so far through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). 1million employers have used the Scheme.
- 2.3million Self-employment Income Support (SEISS) claims have been submitted worth £6.8 billion.
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) has seen 608,069 approved loans so far worth £18.49 billion.
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) has seen 43,045 loans worth £8.15billion approved so far.

The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) has seen 154 approved loans totalling £0.82 billion.

## ■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

**Andy McDonald:** [\[49014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many covid-19 risk assessments have been (a) carried out and (b) made publicly available at businesses with (i) less than and (ii) more than 50 employees.

**Paul Scully:**

Existing health and safety legislation requires risk assessments. The safer working guidance does not change this.

Employers have a duty to consult their employees, and unions where applicable, as part of their risk assessment. Involving workers in this will help build trust and confidence that all reasonably practicable steps are being taken to reduce risks of COVID-19, so that people can return to work safely.

All businesses should share the results of their risk assessment with their employees. The Government is asking employers to publish the results of these assessments on

their websites whenever possible. The Government expects larger organisations – those with over 50 workers – to publish the results of their risk assessments.

In order to help with this, the Government has provided a new notice which employers can download and display to show they have followed the guidance on managing the risks of COVID-19.

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[49015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 in relation to workplace health and safety during the covid-19 crisis; if he will update the Government's covid-19-secure workplace guidance to include that assessment; and if he will make a statement.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the law, employers are responsible for health and safety management and should take the necessary steps to ensure safe workplaces. During the Covid-19 crisis, the Government has worked with a wide range of businesses, trade unions and representative organisations to issue guidance on safe return to work. Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive have also issued guidance on how to ensure social distancing and hygiene measures in the workplace.

In line with employment and health and safety law, this guidance sets out that where employees have health and safety concerns, they should raise this with their employee representative, trade union, or the Health & Safety Executive. Where HSE identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant PHE guidance to control public health risks they will consider taking a range of enforcement action. The Government recently announced an additional £14 million of funding for HSE to support this work.

## ■ Post Office: Subsidies

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[48506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will extend the public subsidy for Post Office Ltd due to expire in March 2021.

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[48507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what consultations his Department has undertaken on continuing public subsidy to Post Office Ltd after March 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government remains committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the network and will continue working with Post Office Ltd to achieve this. The current Funding Agreement runs until the end of the 2020/21 financial year. Subsidy requirements from April 2021 onwards will be considered as part of discussions on the 2020 Spending Review.

## ■ Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[49682]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) guidance and (b) support his Department has provided to PhD students who cannot complete their research due to the covid-19 outbreak; and what information his Department holds on the number and proportion of those students whose research contracts have been extended as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Government is aware of the consequent pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic on doctoral students and their ability to complete work. This is a difficult time for all post graduate students, academic staff and researchers.

On 9 April it was announced that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will offer a costed extension of up to six months for UKRI PhD students due to complete by 31 March 2021 whose study has been impacted by the pandemic. This includes 6,334 of 22,065 current UKRI-funded doctoral students. Those UKRI-funded students not in their final year may be granted extensions on a case by case basis.

On 24 April, UKRI issued detailed guidance to universities on how the policy should be implemented. UKRI has outlined that universities must put in place processes that are based upon the principles of ensuring all UKRI doctoral students are supported to complete their projects and that they should be treated fairly, generously and sympathetically given the disruptions caused to research programmes and individual's personal circumstances.

UKRI is engaging with the wider sector about the implementation of the extension and to identify and understand future impact, including the numbers of students it funds that are affected. The extension will be reviewed in four months' time to ensure that any further impacts to doctoral training are taken into account.

The Department does not hold information on the overall number of PhD students – UKRI-funded and funded via other sources – who have had their research contracts extended.

## ■ Poverty

**Richard Burgon:**

**[49772]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the change in the number people earning the minimum wage who are living in poverty since 1 March 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) ensure that the lowest paid workers are fairly rewarded for their valuable contribution to the economy. Since 2010, the minimum wage rates have increased faster than average wages and inflation, meaning more money for the lowest paid.

This April, we increased the NLW to £8.72, meeting its target to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020, benefiting an estimated 2 million workers. A full-time worker on the NLW will be £930 better off, over the course of the year.

As well as increasing the NLW, the Government has announced an unprecedented series of measures to support businesses and their employees to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. This includes over £6.5 billion of extra support through the welfare system. The Government is continuously monitoring the evolving economic and labour market situation to identify the most effective ways to help people stay in or close to work both now and in the future. Data on the number of people earning the minimum wage who are living in poverty since 1 March 2020 is not currently available.

## ■ Public Holidays

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[49795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of proposals for an additional bank holiday in autumn 2020; and whether his Department has identified potential dates for that proposed bank holiday.

**Paul Scully:**

Currently there are no plans to change the bank holiday dates.

The Government regularly receives requests for additional bank and public holidays to commemorate a variety of occasions. The current pattern of public and bank holidays is well established and acknowledged within the country.

Whilst an additional bank holiday may benefit some communities and sectors, the cost to the economy of an additional bank holiday is considerable. The estimated cost to the economy of the one-off bank holiday for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 was £1.2 billion.

## ■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[49725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what criteria the Government is using to decide which retail businesses can open on 1 June 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Paul Scully:**

Since 1 June, outdoor markets and car showrooms have been able to open. The transmission of the virus is lower outdoors and in open spaces and the COVID-secure guidelines can be more easily followed.

All other non-essential retail will be able to reopen from 15 June if the scientific and medical advice allows and they are able to follow the COVID-secure guidelines. This provides shops and other retail branches enough time to put in place the necessary social distancing measures and hygiene standards.

**■ Small Businesses: EU Grants and Loans**

**Liam Byrne:** [\[48952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is the Government's policy to seek to draw down the UK share of the coronavirus response investment initiative.

**Paul Scully:**

It will be for the UK Managing Authorities to decide how best to use these flexibilities for each Programme under the European Structural and Investment Funds. They are considering this and are determining the levels of funding available for projects to address the economic and health impacts of Covid19. A clearer view of this will emerge in due course.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Borders: Northern Ireland**

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[48288\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the Government has made in negotiations with the EU on the practical arrangements to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol of the EU Withdrawal Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[48289\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish details of the EU's proposals on the practical arrangements to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol of the EU Withdrawal Agreement on checks on goods travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

On 20 May 2020, the UK Government set out our approach to implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol in the Command Paper '[The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol](#)'. We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Protocol and, as we do, our priority remains protecting Northern Ireland's place in our United Kingdom, and preserving the huge gains from the peace process and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

The EU published a technical note on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland on 30th April, which can be found on the Commission's website [here](#).

The first meeting of the Specialised Committee on Northern Ireland took place on 30 April, following the first meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee.

We stand ready to work with the EU in a constructive and collaborative spirit, building on our initial engagements in the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee and Ireland/Northern Ireland Specialised Committee.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[49885\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the preparedness of the UK border for the end of the EU Withdrawal Agreement Implementation Period on 31 December 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Cabinet Office ministers - and in particular the Minister for the Cabinet Office, me as Paymaster General, and Lord True, frequently discuss matters relating to border preparedness with Cabinet and ministerial colleagues, including at the relevant Cabinet Committees which are Exit Operations (XO) and Exit Strategy (XS). In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK is ready for the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020, and for seizing the opportunities of leaving the Single Market and EU Customs Union at that point. Work on border preparedness takes places across Government, including ministers and officials from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for International Trade, and UK Border Force.

#### ■ **Cabinet Office: Correspondence**

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[49735\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the average length of time was for Ministers of his Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Cabinet Office has a target of responding within 20 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, the Cabinet Office is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Officials are ensuring that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised, and are taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

#### ■ **Cabinet Office: Directors**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[49776\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his 12 May 2020 announcement of four new Cabinet Office non-executive board members, how many candidates (a) applied and (b) were invited to interview with Ministers; and what the



criteria were for (i) the appointment of those candidates and (ii) membership of the appointment board.

**Helen Hayes:** [49777]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to his 12 May 2020 announcement of four new Cabinet Office non-executive board members, what assessment he made in that appointment process of candidates' potential conflicts of interest; and if he will publish the declarations of interest of those board members.

**Chloe Smith:**

Non-executive board members are appointed by the minister in charge of the relevant department, in this case the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

163 candidates applied for the role, of which eight were interviewed and four were appointed. Details of the roles, including a job description, were published on the [HM Government Public Appointments](#) and on [GOV.UK](#).

Due diligence, including potential conflicts of interest, was carried out on each appointee. The register of interests for the new Board Members will be published shortly.

#### ■ Care Homes: Redbridge

**Wes Streeting:** [48555]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many covid-19 related deaths were recorded in care homes in the London Borough of Redbridge in each month in 2020.

**Wes Streeting:** [48556]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths in care homes have been recorded in the London borough of Redbridge in each month since January 2020.

**Wes Streeting:** [48557]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many deaths in care homes were recorded in the London borough of Redbridge in each month in 2019.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

#### **Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ48555 48556 48557.pdf]

#### ■ Civil Servants: Coronavirus

**Tim Farron:** [48381]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many civil servants have been re-deployed to support the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak.



**Chloe Smith:**

The Government's number one priority is the response to the covid-19 outbreak. As such many civil servants within departments are working on different aspects of the overall response to the pandemic, and have been redeployed to do so.

Comprehensive details of these internal redeployments are not held centrally. The Government Resourcing Hub is also moving civil servants to COVID-19 roles across different departments.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Steve Reed:**[\[49701\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on which dates data on people who are medically extremely vulnerable to covid-19 and should therefore be shielded has been provided to local authorities; and the details of how many individuals were provided on each occasion.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government Digital Service (GDS) - acting as the data controller for the shielded patient list (SPL) (ie persons who are medically extremely vulnerable to covid-19), as supplied by the NHS - has provided data of individuals on this list to local authorities. GDS initially provided data from the 'registered list' to local authorities in late March. From 2 April GDS provided the entire SPL, which was updated by the NHS on 9 April and 6 May, and then on a rolling basis.

Individual local authorities are only able to access SPL records where the postcode matches their relevant area.

The number of NHS SPL individuals was 2,232,175 as at 26 May 2020 and the number of 'registered list' individuals was 1,190,213 as at 26 May 2020. Note that the 'registered list' is broadly a subset of the SPL, not additional to it.

**■ Government Departments: Coronavirus****Jack Brereton:**[\[46784\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that Government departments buy (a) ceramic tableware and (b) other products from UK manufacturers (i) during and (ii) after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jack Brereton:**[\[46785\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to encourage executive agencies to buy (a) ceramic tableware and (b) other products from UK manufacturers to support domestic industries during the covid-19 outbreak .

**Chloe Smith:**

Further to the [comments on the ceramics industry](#) by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster made in the House on 19 May 2020, the Government has taken unprecedented action to support businesses, including the ceramics sector, during the outbreak of COVID-19 by introducing a range of initiatives

from the opportunity to defer VAT and/or income tax for 3 months to the Job Retention Scheme and access to government-backed financing.

Government departments and executive agencies spend a significant sum on public procurement, and we are aware of the vital role this will play in kick-starting the economy once the pandemic has passed. Contracting Authorities are already required to consider the social and environmental impacts of procurements and we intend to deliver a package of ambitious measures, including launching a new social value model, to support the recovery effort to ensure that Government's huge purchasing power is used to support communities and the local economy. The model can form a key part of the government's overall plan for recovery as it enables commercial teams to select policy outcomes to:

- Tackle regional inequality with new jobs and skills, including retraining the unemployed in clean growth sectors, and helping disadvantaged communities recover.
- Promote economic growth and prosperity by supporting SMEs and start-ups to lead or be part of government supply chains.
- Support physical and mental health and ensure those in disadvantaged groups have equal opportunity to become part of a diverse, resilient workforce.

## ■ Inflation: Coronavirus

**Gerald Jones:**

[\[48553\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that the basis of monthly inflation figures produced by the Office for National Statistics remains comparable during the period of the covid-19 lockdown throughout the UK.

**Chloe Smith:**

The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

### Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ48553.pdf]

## ■ Joint Ministerial Committee On EU Negotiations

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[48536\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the date is for the next meeting of the EU-UK Joint Committee.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The second Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee meeting will take place on 12 June. Further to the [WMS](#) by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 25 March, Parliament will be updated ahead of the next meeting with details including an agreed agenda by Written Ministerial Statement.

## ■ Marriage: Coronavirus

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[48959\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if the Government will make an assessment of the potential merits of easing covid-19 restrictions to allow weddings to take place with a limited number of attendees.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[49614\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to release updated guidance on marriages during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

As stated in '[Our Plan To Rebuild](#)', the Government's COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, the Government is examining how to enable people to gather in slightly larger groups to better facilitate small weddings.

## ■ Ministerial Responsibility

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[48583\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2020 to Question 43737 on Ministerial Responsibility, and with reference to the oral contribution of 6 May 2020 of the Leader of the House, Official Report, column 583 on Business Statement, on what date he plans to update the list of ministerial responsibilities published on GOV.UK, last updated in October 2019 and before the last ministerial reshuffle.

**Chloe Smith:**

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [43737](#) on 11 May 2020.

## ■ Prime Minister: Consultants

**Layla Moran:** [\[49817\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost to the public purse was of consultants advising his Department in each financial year from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

**Chloe Smith:**

Spend on external consultants is published in our Annual Report and Accounts. These are available on [gov.uk](#).

Details of spend over £25,000 are also published on [gov.uk](#).

## ■ UK Relations With EU

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[49062\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish the framework for the future relationship with the EU.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

On 19 May the Government published our [draft legal texts](#), which have previously been shared with the EU negotiating team.

These twelve documents cover the full set of negotiating texts, including a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement as well as side agreements.

We have decided to publish these now as a constructive contribution to the negotiations to ensure they are available to all and to enable the Commission to share the texts with the Member States, in case helpful.

## ■ UK Trade With EU

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[46738\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the outstanding issues to be tackled in negotiations for a future UK-EU trade deal.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

The UK and EU have engaged in three full and constructive negotiating rounds. Discussions covered all workstreams including trade in goods and services.

Discussions also showed that a standard Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement could be agreed without major difficulties in the time available.

A Written Ministerial Statement ([HCWS245](#)) made by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 19 May updated the progress of negotiations.

## ■ Visas: EU Countries

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[48438\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on allowing 180-day visa-free tourist travel for UK citizens in the Schengen area.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Arrangements for UK nationals crossing the Schengen Area border will remain as now for the duration of the transition period. Thereafter, the EU will grant UK nationals visa free access for short-term visits, subject to reciprocity. This means that UK business visitors and tourists will not need a visa when travelling to the Schengen area for short stays of up to 90 days in every 180-day period.

We are willing to discuss with the EU how to facilitate crossing of our respective borders for legitimate travel purposes.

## DEFENCE

## ■ Armed Forces: Pay

**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[48586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the Government plans to issue the armed forces pay award.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[48587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay of the armed forces pay award on morale in the armed forces.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[\[48588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the armed forces pay award delay on (a) recruitment and (b) retention in the armed forces.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Government is currently considering the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body's (AFPRB) recommendations, taking into account the need to recruit, retain, and motivate personnel, as well as the long-term affordability of the Armed Forces. Once a decision has been reached, any pay rises will be backdated to 1 April 2020.

The maintenance of morale in the Armed Forces is a high priority and is measured in a robust, consistent and scientific manner, through mechanisms such as the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS). We have been unable to attribute fluctuations in morale to specific factors such as pay, and more specifically, to delay of the pay award. Neither do we anticipate that this would have a detrimental impact on recruitment or retention.

There are a range of measures underway in the fields of recruitment and retention; these are kept under constant review. Last year we secured an across the board pay rise of 2.9% for all personnel up to 1-star rank and introduced other financial initiatives in certain priority areas. The Future Accommodation Model (FAM) is now being trialled at scale and will give our personnel greater choice of housing options to better suit their lifestyles. The introduction of Flexible Service has enabled our personnel to alter their career commitment for set periods of time so that may remain in the Armed Forces while balancing the demands of other domestic responsibilities. Lastly, we have also collaborated with industry to provide new opportunities for those with critical skills in order to improve retention within the wider Defence community.

## ■ Defence: Procurement

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[49607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department plans to reintroduce the Major Projects Report.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Major Projects Report was phased out in 2015 and replaced by the Project Performance Summary table in the Equipment Plan financial summary from 2016. The Ministry of Defence has published an annual summary of its plans for spending on equipment procurement and support since 2012 and has no plans to reintroduce the Major Projects Report.

## ■ HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Queen Elizabeth: Shipbuilding

**Douglas Chapman:** [\[49025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to establish in the 2020-21 financial year the final cost to the public purse of the Carrier Alliance project to build HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Queen Elizabeth.

**Jeremy Quin:**

We hope to conclude negotiations with our Aircraft Carrier Alliance industry partners on the final cost of the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers before the end of the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

## ■ Type 23 Frigates

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[49605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to Answer of 6 May 2020 to Question 41912 on Type 23 Frigates, how many days each Type 23 Frigate was at sea in the years (a) 2018, (b) 2017, (c) 2016 and (d) 2015.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[49606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each Type 45 Destroyer was at sea in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Type 23 Frigates:

| FRIGATE        | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| ARGYLL         | 25   | 0    | 111  | 141  |
| IRON DUKE      | 85   | 132  | 94   | 0    |
| KENT           | 124  | 67   | 0    | 57   |
| LANCASTER      | 157  | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| MONMOUTH       | 68   | 113  | 209  | 131  |
| MONTROSE       | 0    | 0    | 41   | 145  |
| NORTHUMBERLAND | 48   | 0    | 0    | 117  |
| PORTLAND       | 107  | 176  | 41   | 0    |
| RICHMOND       | 180  | 73   | 51   | 0    |
| SOMERSET       | 131  | 113  | 95   | 60   |
| ST ALBANS      | 122  | 136  | 138  | 120  |

| FRIGATE     | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| SUTHERLAND  | 127  | 127  | 103  | 166  |
| WESTMINSTER | 0    | 0    | 126  | 152  |

Type 45 Destroyers:

| DESTROYER | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| DARING    | 48   | 148  | 85   | 0    | 0    |
| DAUNTLESS | 114  | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| DIAMOND   | 27   | 118  | 116  | 99   | 14   |
| DRAGON    | 69   | 56   | 56   | 145  | 163  |
| DEFENDER  | 106  | 115  | 0    | 84   | 183  |
| DUNCAN    | 188  | 86   | 107  | 135  | 153  |

The normal operating cycle of every ship involves them entering different readiness levels depending on their programmes, periods of refit and Departmental planning requirements. In addition, these figures represent days at sea, and it should be noted that, while deployed away from the UK, ships will spend both days at sea and alongside in ports around the world.

#### ■ Veterans: Commonwealth

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[49610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support Commonwealth-born veterans without the right to remain in the UK.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Veterans UK's Veterans Welfare Service and Defence Transition Services provide the same level of support to Foreign and Commonwealth veterans as they do to any other veteran. They provide relevant advice, information and support, assisting veterans to access the appropriate range of services to meet their individual needs and requirements. This support continues for as long as required as part of our commitment to providing 'through-life support' to veterans.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ **Catering****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[49634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate his Department has made of the contribution to the UK economy of the event catering industry; and what estimate he has made of trends in the level of contribution from that sector in each of the next five years.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The hospitality sector is hugely important to the UK economy, supporting 3.2 million jobs across the country and representing almost 10% of the country's total employment. My Department has not made an estimate of the current or future contribution of the event catering industry to the broader hospitality sector.

We have been encouraged by the industry's commitments to develop new hospitality career opportunities as part of the Tourism Sector Deal - including boosting apprenticeships and developing a new mentoring scheme.

We recognise that the COVID-19 crisis has significantly impacted multiple parts of the hospitality industry. We remain in regular contact with stakeholders, including UKHospitality, and will continue to monitor the situation. Hospitality businesses and workers can access the Government's economic support package, including the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan scheme.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus****Barbara Keeley:**[\[48374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when charities providing support for people during the covid-19 outbreak will be able to submit bids for funding to National Lottery Community Fund; and what the planned timetable is for distributing that funding.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

On 8 April, Government announced a £750m civil society support package. Of this, £360m is being distributed by central Government Departments and £370m is available for charities providing vital services for those affected by the pandemic.

Of the £310m available in England, £200m is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. Charities and social enterprises can bid into the Coronavirus Community Support Fund from 22 May.



This funding will support organisations working with people and communities experiencing disproportionate challenges during the crisis, and those that provide services and support for vulnerable people which have seen an increase in demand or have lost income. Supporting guidance is provided on the National Lottery Community Fund website.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[48625]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the £360 million allocated to charities to help mitigate the effect of the covid-19 outbreak has been allocated to disability charities.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The £750 million funding package announced by the Government on 8 April is to ensure charities providing frontline services to vulnerable people affected by the pandemic can continue their vital work. £360 million of this is being distributed via individual government departments based on evidence of service need. £200 million of this will directly support hospices and be administered by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Departments are using a range of approaches to allocating the remaining funding in order to meet identified needs quickly, including bidding processes and awarding funding directly. Applications are now open for funding for the distribution of food to vulnerable people, safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse, armed services charities, and charities working to tackle loneliness and homelessness. Further announcements from individual departments are expected shortly. Further information has been released on GOV.UK.

As applications are still open for several of the funds and there are announcements yet to be made, it is not possible to determine how much of this funding has been allocated to disability charities at this stage. Disability charities will be eligible for a range of the funds.

On 20 May the government committed £200 million to the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, which will be distributed by the National Lottery Community Foundation. The fund will support small and medium sized charities and social enterprises and will be open for applications on 22 May. Disability charities will be eligible to apply for this funding.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49753]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Charities Commissioner to ensure that charities are do not go into administration as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

DCMS and the Charity Commission are proactively engaging across the sector to maintain a complete picture of the impact of coronavirus, and working to identify the additional support charities require through this time of financial instability. The

Government announced an unprecedented £750million package to ensure VCSE organisations can continue their vital work during the covid-19 outbreak.

The Charity Commission is ensuring its approach to regulation during the Covid-19 crisis is as flexible and pragmatic as possible in the public interest. In line with this approach, the Charity Commission has published guidance for charities which covers a range of topics such as the use of reserves to manage financial difficulties and extensions to account filing deadlines. The guidance is available on the Gov.uk and is being updated regularly: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector>

The Government has also introduced the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill which will relieve the burden on businesses, including charities, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The Bill will introduce temporary easements on company filing requirements and Annual General Meetings (AGMs), introduce new corporate restructuring tools, and temporarily suspend parts of insolvency law, allowing businesses, including charities to focus all their efforts on continuing to operate.

#### ■ Charities: Staff

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49057]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of enabling furloughed staff from charities to participate in fundraising activities for their organisations.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, furloughed employees can take part in voluntary work, provided that volunteering tasks do not supply services or generate revenue for their employer or a company linked or associated to their employer. This would therefore prevent charity employees who are furloughed from volunteering for the organisation they are employed by. The core focus of the scheme is to help those who otherwise would have been made unemployed and provide support to businesses as quickly as possible.

The system has been carefully designed to encourage employees who have been furloughed to take up opportunities to support the delivery of essential services through volunteering, while avoiding the possibility of individual employees being put in a situation where they are doing their contracted work for little or no payment.

#### ■ Disinformation: Coronavirus

**Owen Thompson:**

**[48542]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the spread of fake news relating to covid-19 circulating (a) on social media and (b) in print media.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government takes the issue of disinformation very seriously. It is vitally important, at this time of national emergency, that the public has accurate information and DCMS is leading work across Government to tackle disinformation. The Government has seen positive steps taken by social media platforms to curtail the spread of harmful and misleading narratives related to COVID-19. We are working closely with platforms to help them identify and remove dangerous and incorrect claims about the virus, in line with their terms and conditions, as well as promote authoritative sources of information.

To help drive awareness of the Government's national campaign to provide information and reassurance to the public about COVID-19, we have created new and innovative partnerships to drive awareness, engagement and compliance. This includes a significant public information campaign across the local and national press which is providing information and reassurance to the public and is ensuring that authoritative, up-to-date information about the Government's response to Covid-19 is distributed through reliable channels. The government does not intervene in what the press can and cannot publish. Newspapers are subject to independent self-regulation.

The Government is running a counter disinformation campaign, "Don't feed the Beast" which aims to increase audience resilience by educating and empowering those who see, inadvertently share and are affected by false and misleading information. The campaign promotes the SHARE checklist, providing the public with five easy steps to identify false content, encouraging users to stop and think before they share content online.

**■ Easyjet: Disclosure of Information****Chi Onwurah:****[49676]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions has he had with representatives from (a) the Information Commissioner's Office and (b) Easyjet on (i) the nature of the data that was leaked and (ii) when customers of Easyjet will be informed.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Information Commissioner performs her regulatory functions independently of Government as such I am unable to comment on ongoing investigations or on individual cases.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been working with EasyJet from the outset to understand how the incident has affected people in the UK. On Tuesday 19 May, NCSC published advice on its website that includes practical advice concerned citizens can follow.

EasyJet have said they have already contacted all 2,208 customers who had their credit cards details accessed. They have also contacted the other 9 million customers who had their email address and travel details accessed.

**■ Greyhound Racing: Coronavirus****Conor McGinn:**[\[48522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what (a) financial and (b) other support his Department has provided to the greyhound racing sector as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Greyhound racing, as part of the leisure industry, is eligible to access the help announced by the Chancellor on 17 March. This set out a business rates holiday for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, irrespective of rateable value, so that all eligible businesses will pay no business rates for 12 months. On 18 March, MHCLG published guidance for local authorities on the application of the relief.

In addition, the government has announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, through which all UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis. Furthermore, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme provides loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank, backed by an 80% government guarantee.

Officials continue to be in regular communication with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain to understand the needs of the sector during this time and ensure they are aware of central government guidance as we work towards the resumption of greyhound racing.

**■ National Lottery: Finance****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[48661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of the National Lottery's income is derived from players aged 16 and 17 in (a) main lottery sales (i) online (ii) in shops and (b) scratchcard sales (i) online and (ii) in shops.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Information on National Lottery income derived from players aged 16 and 17 is provided in the [Consultation document](#) dated 16 July 2019 on the minimum age for playing National Lottery games.

Sales revenue derived from players aged 16 and 17 is estimated due to the complexities involved in collating data from retail sales.

Total estimated sales revenue from 16 and 17 year olds in 2017/18 was £47m of which 32% was for draw-based games, 68% for scratchcards and less than 1% for online instant win games (inclusive of online scratchcards).

This below data is from page 24 of the consultation document.

**NATIONAL LOTTERY  
INCOME FROM 16 AND  
17 YEAR OLDS IN  
2017/18**

|   | ONLINE   | RETAIL | AS % OF TOTAL SALES<br>IN 2017/18 |
|---|----------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Draw-based games</b>   | £15m*    |        | 0.2%                              |
| <b>Scratchcards</b>   |          | £31.8m | 0.5%                              |
| <b>Instant Win Games<br/>(inclusive of online<br/>scratchcards)</b> | £200,000 |        | 0.003%                            |
| <b>Total</b>  | £47m     |        | 0.7%                              |

Figures rounded to the nearest £0.1m

\* Over 99% of draw-based game sales to 16 and 17 year olds would have taken place in retail.

■ **Public Libraries: Coronavirus**

**Sir Desmond Swayne:**

[\[48676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Digital Media and Sport, into which step of the Government's covid-19 recovery strategy does the re-opening of public libraries fall.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

Although physical library locations are closed, library services have continued to provide and deliver services to their users throughout the lockdown period. Digital services have been sustained, as well as other elements of library services, such as no- or low-contact home library services.

The restoration of public libraries in England will be considered through the Recreation and Leisure taskforce, primarily as part of Step 3 of the government roadmap. The current planning assumption is that general reopening of library buildings will be no earlier than 4 July.

■ **Shops: Coronavirus**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[48944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will prioritise reopening of (a) caravan and motor home sites and (b) other accommodation businesses without shared facilities on the same timescale as reopening non-essential shops; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The government will look at reopening sites such as caravan parks and other accommodation businesses no earlier than 4 July, in line with the wider hospitality

sector. Any decisions will be subject to further scientific advice and the risk assessment at the time.

As part of the government's Leisure and Recreation taskforce, my department has set up a Visitor Economy Working Group to specifically focus on the practicalities and guidelines for opening up the sector during the recovery period. We will issue further guidance shortly on our phased reopening approach, including which businesses could be covered in each phase and the timeframes involved.

## ■ Social Media: Disinformation

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[49683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to require social media platforms to publish audited data on the effectiveness of their anti-disinformation work during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The Government's Counter Disinformation Unit stood up on 5 March 2020 and is working around the clock with Whitehall departments, social media platforms, and disinformation specialists in academia and civil society to lead the fight against misinformation and disinformation. Its responsibilities include monitoring and analysis, strategic communications, and CSP engagement to provide the most comprehensive picture possible about the extent, scope and impact of disinformation and misinformation linked to COVID-19.

As part of the Government response, the Secretary of State met with social media platforms to discuss improved ways of working, including better information sharing processes.

## ■ Sports: Coronavirus

**Ian Lavery:**

**[49002]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the level of support needed by community sports groups and clubs during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I am having regular discussions with sector and industry bodies to understand the impact of COVID-19 on sport and how we can provide support. This includes chairing a fortnightly meeting with over 25 sporting organisations.

The Chancellor has already announced a host of measures to help businesses, with £330 billion worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses across the UK. In addition, Sport England, has also announced £210 million of funding to help sport and physical activity organisations deal with the short and long term effects of the pandemic.

**Alexander Stafford:**

[49880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance his Department has issued to outdoor activity providers on the safe reopening of instructing facilities for (a) water sports and (b) cycling after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Guidance is available on the Gov.UK website and is being continually updated as progress is made toward the safe reopening of all facilities including those for watersports and cycling.

This includes guidance for the public on the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation in England, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-phased-return-of-outdoor-sport-and-recreation>.

We will update the public when we deem it is safe to open up indoor facilities such as pools, leisure centres and gyms and will continue to consult the sector as our plans develop.

#### ■ Voluntary Organisations

**Rachael Maskell:**

[49760]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he last made an assessment of the effectiveness of the Compact with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Government recognises the importance of working together with civil society organisations to support them, maintain their independence and involve them in policy making. We continue to work closely with the sector to ensure meaningful engagement and a productive and effective relationship.

This has been particularly important in the Covid-19 crisis throughout which the Government has been engaging regularly with charities, social enterprises and their representative bodies to respond to the current situation.

#### ■ Voluntary Organisations: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[49059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to issue guidance on the £750m funding for the voluntary and community sector; and what the timeframe is for (a) local authorities and (b) national funders to be able to distribute that funding,



**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government has pledged £750 million to ensure the voluntary and community sector continues its vital work supporting the country during the Coronavirus outbreak. This includes £360m distributed through government departments and £200m for the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, being delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund. The government has unlocked a further £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts, which will be distributed to organisations to support urgent work to tackle youth unemployment, expand access to emergency loans for civil society organisations and help improve the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

We have published clear and comprehensive guidance on the £750 million, plus other sources of support, and how organisations can apply for funding -

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>. This guidance will be updated frequently.

This is a package of emergency response funding and we are working with other government departments and other funding partners to ensure the funding is distributed as quickly as possible.

**Rachael Maskell:****[49754]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to introduce a financial recovery programme for voluntary and community organisations.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government has pledged £750 million to ensure the voluntary and community sector continues its vital work supporting the country during the Coronavirus outbreak. This includes £360m distributed through government departments and £200m for the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, being delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund. The government has unlocked a further £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts, which will be distributed to organisations to support urgent work to tackle youth unemployment, expand access to emergency loans for civil society organisations and help improve the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

We have published clear and comprehensive guidance on the £750 million, plus other sources of support, at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>. This guidance will be updated frequently.

This is a package of emergency response funding targeted at supporting VCSE organisations on the frontline of responding to Coronavirus, or providing other essential services. We are continuing to assess the medium and long-term impact on the sector.



**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49757]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of reduction in finances to voluntary and community organisations over the last (a) 12 weeks, (b) 6 month and (c) 12 months.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

We have been working closely with the sector to understand the financial impacts of the crisis. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations estimated that the sector could lose £4.3bn in the first 12 weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is too early to determine whether this is an accurate assessment.

My department will continue to monitor the health of the sector, its contribution to the nation's Covid-19 response and the financial impacts on organisations.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49759]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the equity of distribution of funding allocated to voluntary and community organisations in areas of deprivation.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government has pledged £750 million to ensure the voluntary and community sector continues its vital work supporting the country during the Coronavirus outbreak. This includes £360m distributed through government departments and £200m for the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. The government has unlocked a further £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts, which will be distributed to organisations to support urgent work to tackle youth unemployment, expand access to emergency loans for civil society organisations and help improve the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

Funding will support organisations working with communities experiencing disproportionate challenges during the crisis and providing services and support for vulnerable people across the country.

It is vital that funding reaches organisations in areas of deprivation. However, as applications are still open for several of the funds and there are announcements yet to be made, it is too early to assess distribution to organisations in areas of deprivation.

**EDUCATION****■ Apprentices: Coronavirus****Sarah Olney:****[49090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend the eligibility of the Education and Skills Funding Agency's post-16 provider relief scheme established in response to the covid-19 outbreak to all apprenticeship providers.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notice 2/20 has allowed us to apply a degree of flexibility to our normal funding arrangements. However, this flexibility only extends to support for organisations with a direct contract for services procured via a process compliant with Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Providers delivering apprenticeship training to employers that pay the apprenticeship levy, or to smaller (non-levy) employers where the training has been arranged through the Apprenticeship Service since 9 January 2020, do not hold a procured contract for services with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to do so, but hold a contract for services with employers for the delivery of training. Therefore, it is not possible to extend eligibility to the Provider Relief Scheme to these providers.

However, we have made significant changes to some aspects of our funding rules training to ensure that providers are able to continue to deliver quality apprenticeships and maintain their income throughout the disruption. Additionally, training providers have in many cases developed effective online learning resources which enables them to retain their apprentices on programme and so to continue to receive funding from ESFA.

**■ Care Homes: Inspections****Tulip Siddiq:****[49076]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the removal by The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 of the requirement to inspect children's homes twice a year which have been judged requires improvement or inadequate, what assessment he has made of (a) in what circumstances and (b) at what frequency those children's homes should be so inspected.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 suspend the routine inspections of children's homes until 25 September 2020. The need for these regulations is being kept under review. Ofsted continues to have powers under section 31 of the Care Standards Act 2000 to request information from and to inspect children's homes. It has risk assessed all children's homes and is undertaking off-site and on-site activity to monitor provision where necessary.

Ofsted is working with the department to consider how best to return to routine inspection when the time is right. Risk assessment, including the previous inspection judgement, will inform priorities.

## ■ Children in Care: Coronavirus

**Tim Farron:**

[\[49630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support is being allocated to councils to support children in the care system during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Tim Farron:**

[\[49632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has made to support a potential increase in the number of children going into care at the end of the covid-19 lockdown.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government has provided over £3.2 billion of additional funding to support local authorities (LAs) in meeting COVID-19 related pressures, including within children's social care.

Our latest guidance on children in care is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>. We will keep this under very close review over the coming weeks and months to understand pressures and issues as they arise.

We have also committed over £100 million to support access to social care services and remote education, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to children with a social worker who do not have access to the internet. Further, we have committed additional funding worth £26.4 million directly to charities to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children and £1.6 million to expand the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's helpline.

In order to ensure engagement with all children and to support effective risk assessment, through emergency legislation and with Social Work England, we have reinstated the professional registration of 8,000 former social workers so that they can re-join the profession, providing additional resource where it is required.

LAs have a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of the children in their care. We are committed to supporting local authorities to increase the sufficiency of care placements, having invested part of our £200 million Children's Social Care Innovation Programme in three projects to increase councils' capacity and improve their commissioning practice. Additional funding for 2 of these projects was confirmed on 24 April as part of the £12.1 million to support vulnerable children who are most at risk. This is in addition to having funded 7 partnerships to test new approaches to commissioning and sufficiency planning in foster care, worth almost £500,000. We have provided temporary flexibility in the fostering regulations which can be found here:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/445/contents/made>.

This aims to make it easier for LAs to identify potential placements and ensure new foster carers are assessed and approved without delay.

## ■ Children: Bereavement Counselling

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49046]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what continuing bereavement support services he plans to make available to support children in relation to (a) deaths from covid-19 and (b) other deaths during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government remains committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people. Access to mental health support including bereavement support is more important than ever during COVID-19. NHS services remain open 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 has also established a dedicated helpline and webpages covering advice for the education sector as well as advice for parents and carers supporting children.

The GOV.UK web pages include information about how education settings, and parents and carers, can support children and young people who may be struggling with mental health during this difficult time. This includes educational provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people> ), information on safeguarding and keeping children safe from online harms ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers> ) and advice on mental health and behaviour ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2> ).

Within the online education resources available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>, there are resources to support mental wellbeing and physical activity, including support for bereavement and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Department for Education is working across government to consider what further resources and support including bereavement support might be appropriate to support children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## ■ Children: Day Care

**Kevin Brennan:**

**[48292]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that women in receipt of reduced support under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme due to periods of maternity leave in the previous

three tax years are not denied entitlement to 30 hours free child care as a result of falling below the income threshold for that entitlement.

**Vicky Ford:**

Individuals who are in receipt of maternity benefits remain eligible for the 30 hours free childcare entitlement.

Those who are currently receiving statutory maternity pay and are intending to return to work, should apply for a 30 hours place in the usual way.

If an individual's return to work date is delayed, or their hours affected solely due to the COVID-19 outbreak, they will remain eligible for 30 hours if their loss of income is directly due to the outbreak. For example, if they have been furloughed or are accessing the self-employment income support scheme.

The government's guidance about Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare during the COVID-19 outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-get-tax-free-childcare-and-30-hours-free-childcare-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[49792]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference the guidance published by his Department on 24 March 2020 entitled Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak, when the temporary changes enabling parents that do not meet the minimum income threshold, due to lower earnings as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, to remain eligible for the 30 hours free entitlement came into force; when the application process will be updated to reflect that change; and how that change is being communicated to parents that are affected.

**Vicky Ford:**

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have revised the application and reconfirmation process to temporarily enable parents whose income has been affected by COVID-19 to remain eligible for the 30 hours free entitlement. A press notice was issued about these changes on 5 May, and we have also communicated this change via email to local authorities.

Guidance was published on 7 May and is available on gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-can-get-tax-free-childcare-and-30-hours-free-childcare-during-coronavirus-covid-19>, and also on the Childcare Choices website:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/coronavirus/>.

HMRC call centres are able to respond to parents' enquiries.

**■ Children: Food****Rachael Maskell:****[49054]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to ensure that every child has access to at least one hot meal each day.

**Vicky Ford:**

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.

Our latest guidance for schools is set out below:

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

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

During this period, we are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. Schools are best placed to make decisions about the most appropriate arrangements for eligible pupils and this can include food parcel arrangements, alternative voucher arrangements or provision through the national voucher scheme. Some schools may apply a combination of these approaches. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children and we encourage this approach where it is possible. We would also always encourage schools to ensure pupils are provided with healthy and nutritious meals. There is no legal requirement that meals should be hot, however we encourage all schools to routinely be offering a hot meal option to those attending school.

We recognise that providing meals and food parcels is not a practicable option for all schools. That is why, on 31 March, we launched a national voucher scheme as an alternative option, with costs covered by the Department for Education. Families are free to select the most appropriate food and drink for their child. When selecting products, we encourage families to consider health and nutrition. The School Food Standards may act as a useful guide for families. There are a number of online resources available to support families in preparing healthy and nutritious food, including on the NHS Eat Well website.

**■ Children: Social Services****Stephanie Peacock:****[48578]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for children's services in light of the finding of the report published by Barnardo's, the Children's Society, Action for Children, the NSPCC and the National Children's Bureau that there has been a £2.2 billion decline in available funding for children's services over the last decade.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government announced at the Local Government Finance Settlement that English councils' core spending power is rising by over £2.9 billion this financial year. This includes £1 billion of new grant funding that can be used flexibly by local authorities to deliver adult and children's social care services. Further to this, the government has provided over £3.2 billion of additional funding to support local authorities in meeting COVID-19 related pressures including on children's services. We will keep this under very close review over the coming weeks and months.

Longer term funding decisions are for this year's Spending Review.

**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[48579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that early intervention children's services are adequately funded.

**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[48580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that children's services have adequate resources to support vulnerable children effectively (a) during and (b) after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government has provided over £3.2 billion of additional funding to support local authorities in meeting COVID-19 related pressures including on children's services and early intervention. This will be kept under very close review over the coming weeks and months.

We have also committed over £100 million to support access to social care services and remote education, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Further, we have committed additional funding worth £26.4 million directly to charities to support them and £1.6 million to expand the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's helpline.

In order to ensure engagement with all children in their care and to support effective risk assessment, through emergency legislation and with Social Work England, we have reinstated the professional registration of 8,000 former social workers so that they can re-join the profession, providing additional resource where it is required.

**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[49786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2020 to Question 45341 on Children: Social Services and Special Educational Needs, for what reasons a Children's Rights Impact Assessment was undertaken for the recent changes to the regulations for children's social care but not for the recent changes to the regulations for children's special education needs and disabilities (SEND) provision.

**Vicky Ford:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 May 2020 to Question [45341](#). As I set out in my answer, the potential impact on children and young people was a key factor in deciding what temporary changes to legislation would be appropriate.



We are confident that the impact on children and young people was fully considered in relation to the temporary changes to both sets of regulations and Equality Impact Assessments were carried out. We will continue to consider this as we keep the impact of these changes under review.

There is ministerial commitment to consider children's rights when making new policy and law, but Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) are not a statutory requirement. The CRIA template is available to provide a helpful structure for policy makers to be able to evidence their consideration of children's rights. Regarding the changes to the regulations for children's special education needs and disabilities (SEND), the department considered that the statutory Equality Impact Assessment gave sufficient consideration to the impact on children so as not to require a separate CRIA.

## ■ Educational Institutions and Social Services: Inspections

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[49075]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Ofsted's announcement of 17 March 2020 on the temporary suspension of routine Ofsted inspections of schools, further education, early years and social care providers, under which powers that suspension was made; on what date that suspension came into effect; and whether that suspension includes inspections of children's homes.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 17 March, the Secretary of State announced the temporary suspension of routine Ofsted inspections in the school, further education, early years, local authority and care sectors. The suspension, which includes routine inspections of children's homes, took effect from that date, although legislative measures have followed subsequently.

The Government remains fully committed to inspection by Ofsted, and routine inspection will resume at the appropriate time. In the meantime, Ofsted may use its inspection powers if it has significant safeguarding concerns.

Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 places a duty on HM Chief Inspector to inspect state-funded schools at prescribed intervals. This duty has been temporarily suspended under the Coronavirus Act 2020 Disapplication of sections 5(1), 15(3), 17(2), 48(3) and 49(1) and (2) of the Education Act 2005 (England) Notice 2020, which took effect from 1 May 2020.

Ofsted's routine inspection of further education and skills take place under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. These provisions do not require amendment during this period as there are no statutory requirements for inspection intervals.

Routine inspections of independent schools by Ofsted take place on a direction from the Secretary of State under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. On 25 March, the Secretary of State confirmed to HM Chief Inspector that standard



inspections of independent schools by Ofsted did not need to take place until further notice.

The period within which Ofsted must inspect provision registered on the early years register, as required by section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006, is specified by the Secretary of State. On 25 March, the Secretary of State confirmed to HM Chief Inspector that Ofsted will not be required to undertake regular inspections of provision registered on the early years or childcare register until further notice.

The prescribed intervals within which Ofsted must inspect childminder agencies as required by Section 51D(1)(a) and 61E(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006 are specified by the Secretary of State. On 25 March, the Secretary of State confirmed to HM Chief Inspector that Ofsted will not be required to undertake regular inspections of childminder agencies, until further notice.

In relation to the inspection of local authority children's services, HM Chief Inspector has a power to inspect generally and a duty to inspect at the request of the Secretary of State under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. No amendment during this period was necessary as there are no statutory requirements for inspection intervals.

The frequency of routine inspections for establishments and agencies (children's homes, residential family centres, holiday schemes for disabled children, voluntary adoption agencies, adoption support agencies and fostering agencies) are provided for by regulation 27 of HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) (Children's Homes etc.) Regulations 2015. This regulation was temporarily revoked by the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 with the effect that routine inspections of these establishments and agencies are suspended until 25 September 2020. This will be kept under review.

## ■ Educational Institutions: Computer Software and Technology

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[49696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £1.5 billion capital funding announced in the 2020 Budget he plans to invest in (a) technology and (b) software for colleges.

**Gillian Keegan:**

We announced plans in the Budget to invest £1.5 billion in England from 2021-22 to upgrade the college estate. Our ambition is to level up the skills of the entire nation and ensure that post-16 education providers are in a great shape to deliver this. We are considering how best to achieve this ambition, in light of the impact of COVID-19 on further education colleges' priorities and requirements, and will announce details on future capital funding in due course.

**■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:** [49694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support the financial recovery of colleges after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Dan Jarvis:** [49695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on colleges of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Gillian Keegan:**

I am very grateful for how colleges are responding to the unique challenge of COVID-19. We recognise the financial impact this is having on the FE sector and are working to make changes where we can.

We have confirmed that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year. Allocations for 2020/21 have also now been confirmed and payments will be made as scheduled. Up to date details are contained in operational guidance available at:

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

In addition, training providers, including colleges, were able to apply to the ESFA Provider Relief Scheme for support if they have contracts for services that were procured as a service under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The purpose of the Relief Scheme is to ensure training providers can continue to deliver high quality education and training to make sure we have the skills needed to rebuild our economy post COVID-19. This also includes supporting new learners where possible to get the skills they need to progress. Details are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-post-16-provider-relief-scheme>.

On 20 May 2020, we also launched a provider relief scheme for European Social Fund contractors. Details are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-esf-provider-relief-scheme>.

For colleges in significant financial difficulties the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term emergency funding.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has also announced a series of wider measures to support employers and employees, recognising the significant impacts caused by COVID-19. We have confirmed that FE providers can apply to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for non grant-funded employees. The CJRS has been extended until August 2020. Up to date details of this support are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>.

As announced last summer, we will next year be increasing investment in education and training of 16-19 year olds by £400 million, including an increased base rate, and

more funding for high cost and high value subjects, which should help the sector to deliver in the difficult circumstances we are facing. In March, we also announced an investment of £1.5 billion over five years in capital spending for further education colleges.

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

## ■ Educational Institutions: Finance

**Dan Jarvis:**

[49693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to review funding rates for colleges.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government announced on 31 August 2019 that it will invest an extra £400 million in 16 to 19 education in 2020-21. This is the largest injection of money in a single year since 2010 and represents an increase of 7% in overall 16 to 19 funding. As part of this, the base rate of 16 to 19 funding will increase by 4.7% in the academic year 2020/21, from £4,000 to £4,188.

The government appreciates the importance of adult education to improving people's life chances and is looking carefully at all elements of further education funding, in preparation for the forthcoming Spending Review.

## ■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

**Helen Hayes:**

[48561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the (a) value of and (b) performance against key performance indicators of the Government's contract with Edenred to administer the free school meals voucher scheme during the covid-19 outbreak since the inception of that scheme.

**Vicky Ford:**

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.

Our latest guidance for schools and other educational settings is set out below:

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

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

The Department for Education made an award of a contract to Edenred pursuant to Regulation 32(2)(c) Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to provide extremely urgent deliverables as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The contract was let as a direct award using the terms of an existing Crown Commercial Service

framework. The department can confirm that we are only paying for the face value of goods delivered – in this case, vouchers.

We continue to work very closely with our supplier, Edenred, to improve the performance of the national free school meals voucher scheme, including by reducing waiting times experienced by schools, parents and carers on the ordering and redemption sites. Edenred reported that over £101.5 million worth of voucher codes has been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families through the scheme as of Friday 22 May.

## ■ Higher Education: Students

**Neil O'Brien:**

**[49820]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) students, (b) undergraduates and (c) postgraduates there were studying at each higher education institution in each year since 2009; and how many of those students in each of those categories were from (i) the UK, (ii) the EU (iii) non-UK, non-EU countries, (iv) China, (v) Macau and (vi) Hong Kong in each of those years.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data on students enrolled in higher education.

Counts of student enrolments at each UK higher education institution (HEI) are available by level of study and region of domicile (UK, EU, non-EU) for the academic years 2014/15 to 2018/19 in Table 1 of HESA's Higher Education Student Data pages: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-1>.

In addition, data is available by level of study and individual countries of domicile for the academic years 2014/15 to 2018/19 in Table 28 of HESA's Student Data pages: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-28>.

Student enrolment data prior to 2014/15 can be accessed through HESA's publications archive at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>. The drop-down "Students in Higher Education" shows the list of historic publications going back to the academic year 1994/95. Equivalent information exists for Table 1 of each publication year.

Student enrolment data prior to 2014/15 by individual countries of domicile is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**Neil O'Brien:**

**[49821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much (a) total income and (b) fee income each higher education institution received from (i) all students, (ii) UK students, (iii) all non-UK students, (iv) students from (A) China, (B) Macau and (C) Hong Kong in each year since 2009.

**Neil O'Brien:**

**[49822]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much fee income each higher education institution received from (a) postgraduates, (b) UK postgraduates, (c) non-UK postgraduates and (d) postgraduates from (i) China, (ii) Macau and (iii) Hong Kong, in each year since 2009.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes data on the finances of higher education providers[1] in the UK.

Income data by source at each UK higher education provider is available in Table 7 of HESA's 'Higher Education Provider Data: Finance' pages for the academic years 2015/16 to 2018/19 at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/table-7>.

More detailed information about income from tuition fees, such as the domicile status (UK, EU and non-EU) and the level of study it relates to, can be found in Table 6: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances/table-6>.

Data prior to 2015/16 can be accessed through HESA's publications archive at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>.

The drop-down 'Finances of Higher Education Providers' shows the list of historical publications going back to the academic year 1994/95. Largely equivalent information can be found in Tables 2 to 5 of each publication year.

The financial information available from HESA is not collected for specific countries of origin. An indication of the relative importance to each provider of students from China, Macau and Hong Kong over the past 5 years is available in Table 28 of HESA's 'Higher Education Student Data' pages: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-28>.

[1] Since 2018/19, this includes both higher education (HEIs) and alternative providers (APs).

## ■ Home Education

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49052]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure the continued provision of best practice remote schooling for (a) children who have a negative experience of school and (b) other vulnerable children.

**Simon Baynes:**

**[49134]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the use of online interactive taught lessons 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.

Since 23 March, in line with the scientific advice, nurseries, schools and colleges have remained open to children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The Department is committed to ensuring that all children can continue to learn at home in these very difficult circumstances, including vulnerable pupils who do not attend school. It is up to each school to determine how to deliver education to its pupils and we recognise that many schools have already shared resources for children who are at home. Our latest guidance on remote education during COVID-19 outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

This includes an initial list of free online resources identified by educational experts and teachers. Many suppliers have also helpfully made their resources available for free.

Leading state schools collaborated to open The Oak National Academy, which was launched online on 20 April. This initiative is led by 40 teachers who have assembled video lessons and resources for any teacher in the country to make use of if they wish to do so. 180 video lessons will be provided each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. The Oak National Academy's role is to supplement, not to replace, existing provision.

Additionally, the BBC has developed resources for families as part of a comprehensive new education package, which is now available on TV via the red button, on iPlayer and online at BBC Bitesize.

The Government has also committed over £100 million to boost remote education. This includes providing devices and internet access for vulnerable children who need it most, ensuring every school that wants it has access to free, expert technical support to get set up on Google for Education or Microsoft's Office 365 Education, and offering peer support from schools and colleges leading the way with the use of education technology. Provision of internet access, and technical support, will continue to be available to schools during the phased return of children and young people. Devices will be owned by schools and organisations and will benefit children's education long after schools have opened to all pupils.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49749]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2020 to Question 46731, when he plans to publish more detailed guidance on the operation of social distancing for providers of early years education.

**Vicky Ford:**

To further support early years providers and childminders, we have worked with early years stakeholders to develop a planning guide with information for providers as they prepare to open to all children. The planning guide covers preparing premises, reviewing staff availability, reducing transmission risk (including working in small

groups), communicating with staff, parents and carers on plans, safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing requirements and Early Years Foundation Stage considerations.

The planning guide was published on 24 May and further guidance published on 1 July, both can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

Previously published guidance about protective measures for education and childcare settings and safe working in education settings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe#what-care-should-be-taken-in-early-years-settings>.

## ■ Private Education: Coronavirus

**Sir Desmond Swayne:**

**[48246]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the covid-19 lockdown, if he will give discretion to independent schools to prioritise the return of Year 8 pupils due to undertake Common Entrance examinations.

**Nick Gibb:**

As of 1 June 2020, the Government has asked primary schools to welcome back children in Nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups.

We want to get all children and young people back into education as soon as the scientific advice allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers, carers and teachers. The safety of children and staff is our utmost priority.

Guidance for schools and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

We expect all mainstream schools and colleges, including independent schools, to follow the same approach, to ensure national parity for children in this year group.



**■ Pupils: Coronavirus****Kate Osborne:** [48650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many disadvantaged pupils have been provided with a laptop for homeworking during the period of school closures due to the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Jarrow constituency, (b) the North East and (c) England.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G routers.

We are providing laptops and tablets to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in Year 10, receiving support from a social worker or are a care leaver. Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in Year 10 do not have internet connections, we are providing 4G wireless routers.

Local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify and prioritise children and young people who need devices. The Department is agreeing the number of devices allocated to each local authority and academy trust based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have access to a device.

**■ Schools: Attendance****Rachael Maskell:** [49047]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will relax the fines regime for non-attendance at school by pupils in families with specific health conditions.

**Nick Gibb:**

Parents of pupils not currently in school due to closures will not be penalised, and there are no immediate plans for this to change when schools begin to reopen.

**■ Schools: Coronavirus****Bill Esterson:** [48399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the range of workers that should be regarded as key workers for the purposes of giving access to schools for their children during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has published guidance on critical workers who can access schools or educational settings, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>.

The definition of critical workers remains unchanged.



As we have made progress in reducing the transmission of COVID-19, we are encouraging all eligible children to attend schools or educational settings, even if parents are able to keep their children at home. This is only where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household.

**Bill Esterson:**

[\[48402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, whether children returning to school in June 2020 will follow the National Curriculum.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools and colleges continue to be best placed to make decisions about how to support and educate all their pupils during this period, based on the local context and staff capacity.

Where year groups are returning to school, we would expect school leaders and teachers to assess the stage pupils have reached in the school curriculum and the adjustments that may need to be made.

Schools should do all they can to support pupils attending school as well as those remaining at home, making use of the available remote education support such as Oak National Academy.

No school will be penalised if they are unable to offer a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils during this period.

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

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[48417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has plans to reimburse schools for the costs that they have incurred as a result of providing online learning for pupils during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

We are providing schools with the biggest funding boost in a decade, making sure that every school will receive more money for every pupil.

We are increasing school funding by £14.4 billion across the next three years, with increases of £2.6 billion this year, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

We are also continuing to pay the pupil premium, worth around £2.4 billion per annum, to schools so that they have extra funding to provide support to their disadvantaged pupils, with per-pupil rates for the current financial year being the highest ever.

The Government has committed over £100 million to support remote education. As part of this, we are providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds across England with free laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to help them learn from home during the lockdown.

To support the hard work of schools in delivering remote education, 40 teachers have come together to develop the brand-new Oak National Academy, launched at the start of the summer term. Oak Academy provides 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to year 10.

We are also providing additional funding to schools, on top of existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be met from their existing resources.

Schools can claim up to a maximum amount that will depend on their size, and will be no more than £75,000 per school.

**Layla Moran:**

**[48596]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the scientific evidence submitted to his Department in relation to covid-19 on the (a) transmissibility for 0-10 year old children, (b) infection rates for 0-10 children, (c) expected infection and death rates for the children that return to education settings, (d) expected infection and death rates among teaching staff that return to education settings and (e) expected infection and death rates among Black Asian and minority ethnic communities in advance of the decision to begin the phased reopening of schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government has asked schools and nurseries to prepare to open to more young people from 1 June, with protective measures in place, as part of a phased wider opening of schools.

The Children's Task and Finish Working Group, established by SAGE (Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies), provided consolidated scientific health advice to Government. Advice from this group was used, alongside other sources of information, to inform decision making on the wider opening schools.

Papers from SAGE meetings are being published in tranches. The first batch was released on 20 March 2020 and further papers were published on 5 May and 22 May 2020, including papers on the wider opening of schools. Further batches will be released regularly.

The list of papers to be released to date is available by following the link below, including a number of schools-related papers. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at future meetings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>.

In addition, the department has published an explanatory note to accompany SAGE's findings from the Interdisciplinary Task and Finish Group. This looked specifically at the role of children in transmission and can be found by following the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/887247/Department\\_for\\_Education\\_explanatory\\_note\\_on\\_SAGE\\_modeling.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887247/Department_for_Education_explanatory_note_on_SAGE_modeling.pdf).

ONS published analysis of coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020. This provisional analysis has shown that the risk of death involving coronavirus (COVID-19) among some ethnic groups is significantly higher than that of those of white ethnicity. A review, carried out by PHE, will look to understand how different factors -including ethnicity, gender and obesity -can impact on people's health outcomes from COVID-19. More information can be found by following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-into-factors-impacting-health-outcomes-from-covid-19>.

**Munira Wilson:**

**[48649]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding the Government has allocated to schools reopening on 1 June 2020 for (a) cleaning, (b) personal protective equipment, (c) social distancing and (d) other measures necessary to reduce the transmission of covid-19.

**Nick Gibb:**

Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. That will ensure that they are able to continue to meet their regular financial commitments.

We are also providing additional funding to schools, on top of existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be met from their existing resources. The fund is targeted towards the costs we have identified as the biggest barrier to schools during the period of partial closure and includes additional cleaning costs.

We will continue to keep the scope of this fund under review as we move towards a gradual reopening of schools.

**Kate Osborne:**

**[48651]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has provided to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools on helping to ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils in September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is asking primary schools to invite back Year 6 pupils to support their transition to secondary school.

Primary schools should ensure that information is transferred to destination secondary schools as soon as possible. If practical in the absence of examination results, primary schools should ensure that secondary schools are briefed in as much detail as possible about the attainment profile of pupils.

The Department's latest guidance for primary schools can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools>.

The Department is working to publish further guidance for secondary schools shortly.

## ■ Schools: Protective Clothing

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49044]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of supply of personal protective equipment for (a) staff and (b) pupils in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 14 May 2020, the Department published new guidance on safe working in schools and nurseries, which outlines the specific circumstances in which personal protective equipment (PPE) is required. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>.

The Department has worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) and stakeholders to devise a hierarchy of controls for all education settings which, when implemented, will create an inherently safer system where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced. These include protective measures such as ensuring that anyone with symptoms does not attend their schools or nursery, promoting high standards of hand and respiratory hygiene, regular cleaning of touched surfaces, minimising contact and mixing and, where needed, use of PPE as outlined in our published guidance.

As the guidance details, PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases. In these specific circumstances, schools and nurseries should use their local supply chains to obtain PPE wherever possible.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

**Bill Esterson:**

**[48400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the risks to school staff who work with children with special educational needs of contracting covid-19.

**Vicky Ford:**

The assessment made in relation to the risk to school staff who work with children with special educational needs should be undertaken by the headteacher of the education setting. Headteachers should refer to the guidance regarding the wider opening of schools as of 1 June, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june>.

We expect schools and trusts to work closely with parents, staff and unions, as they normally would, when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances. We also expect schools and trusts to work with their local authorities to determine what services they require and to agree on any specific arrangements during this period.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, education, childcare and children's social care settings must use a range of protective measures to reduce the risk of transmission of infection. This includes making sure that pupils do not attend school if they, or a member of their household, experience symptoms. Other measures include promoting high standards of hand and respiratory hygiene, cleaning touched surfaces more frequently, minimising contact as much as possible and using personal protective equipment (PPE) where appropriate.

Where PPE is recommended, this means that a facemask should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from someone with symptoms of COVID-19 and, if contact is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of fluids entering the eye from coughing, spitting or vomiting, for example, eye protection should also be worn.

The majority of staff in education, childcare and children's social care settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work, even if they are not always able to maintain distance of 2 metres from others. Additional PPE is only needed if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from any child, young person or other learner displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

The department has worked with Public Health England to develop further guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of PPE. This guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

## ■ **Students: Coronavirus**

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[49641]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's announcement New major package to support online learning announced on 19 April 2020, what plans his Department has to extend the digital support package to university students for (a) free laptops and (b) access to 4G internet routers, to ensure that digitally excluded university students are able to continue their studies throughout the covid-19 pandemic.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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

Higher Education (HE) providers take their responsibilities seriously and are best placed to identify the needs of their student body as well as how to develop the services needed to support it. When making changes to the delivery of their courses,

providers need to consider how they support all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. Where students do not have access to the Internet, a computer at home or cannot afford to purchase it, the expectation is that HE providers will provide support through their own hardship funds.

The government has worked closely with the Office for Students to help clarify that providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the funding, worth around £23 million per month for June and July, towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of IT equipment and mental health support, as well as to support providers' access and participation plans.

### ■ Students: Housing

**Hilary Benn:**

**[48284]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued to students on securing accommodation in advance of the start of the autumn 2020 university term.

**Michelle Donelan:**

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

I have written to students advising them that a number of universities and private accommodation providers are now considering how COVID-19 impacts can be managed in accommodation contracts for the 2020/21 academic year to give students confidence to make their plans.

I welcome the actions of many university and private accommodation providers in waiving and refunding rents this summer, along with their efforts to support and care for their students through this difficult period.

Students who have already signed an accommodation contract for next year and, because of COVID-19, think it may no longer fit their requirements, should talk directly to their housing provider.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published guidance on consumer contracts, cancellation and refunds affected by COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-about-cancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds>. This sets out the CMA's view on how the law operates to help consumers understand their rights and help businesses treat their customers fairly. Students may be entitled to refunds from accommodation providers depending on the terms of their contract and their particular circumstances. If students need help, organisations such as Citizens Advice offer a free service, providing information and support.

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

## ■ Teachers: Coronavirus

**Stephanie Peacock:**

**[48581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support teachers in providing face-to-face and online support to students in different year groups and classes during the proposed phased re-opening of schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has asked primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups (vulnerable children and children of key workers), from 1 June. From 15 June, secondary schools can invite year 10 and 12 pupils (years 10 and 11 for alternative provision schools) back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, to supplement their remote education, which will remain the predominant mode of education for these pupils this term. Priority groups can continue to attend full-time.

The Department has published guidance to help schools prepare for wider opening which includes sections on curriculum as well as staff workload and wellbeing. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/actions-for-education-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

The Department has also published a planning guide for primary schools which includes a section on what to teach and how. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools>.

Guidance for secondary school provision is also available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-secondary-schools>.

Teachers will continue to be able to access support to deliver remote teaching to year groups not eligible to be in school at this time. Schools are encouraged to consider how Oak National Academy or other remote education platforms can provide additional support, as well as how education delivered in school, if manageable, could be made available to pupils learning remotely. The Department has provided a range of information, guidance and support for teachers on educating children during the COVID-19 outbreak which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.



## ■ Universities: Coronavirus

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[48283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for the re-opening of universities in autumn 2020.

**Michelle Donelan:**

We expect universities to be open for the autumn term, with a blend of online teaching and in-person tuition that they consider appropriate, taking account of the need to minimise risk to staff and students.

We are working with the higher education sector to identify guidance and best practice that will be needed for universities to make informed decisions about their provision. This will help them to decide when and how they can make facilities accessible again for staff and students in a way that minimises the risks and in line with public health advice.

Universities have remained open throughout lockdown and have applied their research expertise to finding solutions to the COVID-19 outbreak in this unprecedented period. They have also delivered some fantastic and innovative examples of high-quality online learning, and now the sector is working hard in preparation for the new academic year.

## ■ Young People: Health

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[49045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support will be made available to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people (a) inside and (b) outside school.

**Vicky Ford:**

Access to mental health support is more important than ever during COVID-19. NHS services remain open 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 has established a dedicated helpline and webpages covering advice for the education sector as well as advice for parents and carers supporting children. The GOV.UK web pages include information about how education settings, parents and carers can support children and young people who may be struggling with mental health during this difficult time. This includes educational provision for vulnerable children and children of key workers as well as safeguarding, including keeping children safe from online harms and advice on mental health and behaviour. Within the online education resources there are resources to support mental wellbeing, physical activity, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The guidance is available at the following links:



- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

The return to school will in itself be part of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils as attendance enables social interaction with peers, carers and teachers. Pupil wellbeing is an important consideration within our guidance on actions for educational and childcare settings as they prepare for wider opening as of the 1 June 2020. This guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

We are continuing to talk with school and health partners on how to make further resources and support available to schools as children and young people return.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:** [49064]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether inspections of non-livestock goods from Great Britain travelling into the single epidemiological unit on the island of Ireland include (a) animal products and (b) products of non-animal origin.

**Louise Haigh:** [49065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what documentation the Single Epidemiological Unit requires for imports from Great Britain.

**Louise Haigh:** [49066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what fees are currently charged at the Single Epidemiological Unit for consignments from Great Britain.

**Victoria Prentis:**

There are currently no sanitary or phytosanitary (SPS) inspections carried out on products of animal origin (POAO) or animal by-products (ABP) travelling from Great Britain to the island of Ireland. For germinal products, risk-based post-import checks are carried out at destination.

There are SPS, regulatory and customs checks as goods arrive in Northern Ireland (NI) from third countries. This will not change as a result of the NI Protocol.

For POAO and ABP, only commercial documentation is required from Great Britain into the single epidemiological unit on the island of Ireland. Germinal products require health certification.

There are no SPS inspections or documentation requirements on food not of animal origin travelling from Great Britain into the single epidemiological unit on the island of Ireland.

No fees are currently charged at the single epidemiological unit for consignments from Great Britain.

## ■ Agriculture: Finance

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[48568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Agriculture Bill, what criteria his Department will use to determine a public good that is eligible for financial assistance; and whether stakeholders will be able to propose schemes to be considered as a public good.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Agriculture Bill gives the Secretary of State powers to provide financial assistance for particular listed purposes, including: managing land or water to protect or improve the environment; protecting or improving the health and welfare of livestock; supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland; protecting or improving the health of plants; and protecting or improving the quality of soil. Funding such purposes will enable the delivery of a number of Defra's future policies, including the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, which will be the cornerstone of our future agricultural policy.

Founded on the principle of "public money for public goods", ELM is intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and commitment to net zero emissions. Land managers will be paid for delivering the following public goods set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan:

- clean air
- clean and plentiful water
- thriving plants and wildlife
- protection from and mitigation of environmental hazards
- beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment
- mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

We are working closely with a range of environmental and agricultural stakeholders to collaboratively design the new scheme so that it is fit for purpose. We are currently running a programme of Tests and Trials, the priorities for which are the building

blocks we will need for the National Pilot. The National Pilot will provide a critical opportunity to test and refine the scheme design prior to full rollout of the ELM scheme across England.

We are also working closely with stakeholders to inform the design of other future financial assistance schemes which we intend to introduce using the financial assistance powers during the seven-year agricultural transition period from 2021 to 2028.

## ■ Agriculture: Trade Competitiveness

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**

**[49888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) ensure that farmers remain competitive in the UK market and (b) prevent the importation of cheap food products that do not meet UK food standards after the end of the transition period.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government is in regular dialogue with the food and farming industry in all parts of the UK as we forge ahead in our negotiations with the EU and other trading partners. We want a productive, profitable, resilient farming sector that is empowered to produce more of the high-quality food that is prized around the world and appreciated so much at home.

The UK is justly proud of its world-leading standards of food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. These are the high standards British consumers expect from the food they eat and the high standards our hardworking farmers will continue to deliver. The Government's manifesto made clear that we will not compromise on these high standards.

Our priority is a productive, competitive farming sector – one that will support farmers to provide more home grown food produced to higher environmental and animal welfare standards. The Government has committed to a serious and rapid examination of what could be done through labelling in the UK market to promote these high standards and high welfare goods.

Defra is working closely with the devolved administrations to agree the common frameworks that we will need for those returning EU powers that intersect with Devolved competence. The set of principles agreed at the Joint Ministerial Committee for EU negotiations (JMC (EN)) in October 2017 guide Defra in the development of these frameworks. This includes enabling the function of the UK internal market.

At the end of the transition period, the Withdrawal Act will convert all EU standards into domestic law. This includes a ban on using artificial growth hormones in both domestic and imported products. Nothing apart from potable water may be used to clean chicken carcasses. Any changes to these standards would have to come before Parliament.

The Government has also committed to a rapid review and a consultation on the role of labelling to promote high standards of animal welfare.

## ■ Animal Products and Food: Northern Ireland

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[48286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the arrangements for checks on the shipment of food or animal products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland Protocol of the EU Withdrawal Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:** [\[48287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Northern Ireland Executive on future arrangements for any checks on the shipment of food and animal products from Northern Ireland to Great Britain under Northern Ireland Protocol of the EU Withdrawal Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As part of usual Government business, the Environment Secretary has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues and members of the Northern Ireland Executive (NIE) on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, including the elements relating to the movements of agri-food and animal products.

On 20th May, we published the Command Paper, *The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol* (CP226).

We have always been clear that checks on live animals and agri-food will be needed for goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, building on what already happens at ports like Larne and Belfast. The Government is taking this forward with the NIE. We want to ensure new administrative procedures are streamlined and do not affect the flow of trade. The engagement forum announced in the Command Paper will enable business to put forward proposals in this regard.

There will be no new regulatory checks or export declarations as goods leave Northern Ireland for Great Britain. *The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol* reaffirms the Government's commitment, first set out in *New Decade, New Approach*, to legislate to guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK internal market and will ensure that this legislation is in force for 1 January 2021.

## ■ Animals: Imports

**Louise Haigh:** [\[49067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate the Government has made of the proportion of live animals and products of animal origin which currently require documentary, identity and physical checks on entry into Northern Ireland from Great Britain.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[49068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of live animals and products of animal origin currently require a Export Health Certificate signed by an Official Veterinarian in consignments between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Victoria Prentis:**

There are currently no requirements regarding sanitary or phytosanitary (SPS) checks on most products of animal origin (POAO) intended for human consumption on entry into Northern Ireland (NI) from Great Britain (GB). They do not need to be certified by an Official Veterinarian. Certain live animals and germinal products under commercial movement from GB to NI, including livestock such as cattle and sheep, do require a health certificate signed by an Official Veterinarian. These live animal movements are currently subject to a degree of checks at the port of entry, determined by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as the relevant competent authority.

Endangered animals and plants covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) do not currently require CITES checks on entry from GB to NI, although some specimens may require specific documentation for commercial use.

POAO travelling from GB to NI do not require an export health certificate or SPS documentary, visual and physical checks.

There are SPS, regulatory and customs checks as goods arrive in NI from third countries. This will not change as a result of the NI Protocol.

## ■ **Boats: Coronavirus**

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[48962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the cost to the public purse was of Government support for the Navigation Authorities to meet the costs of commercial boat licence and mooring fees for financial year 2020-21 arising from the covid-19 pandemic.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No specific support has been provided to navigation authorities to meet the costs of commercial boat license and mooring fees arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government is providing an unprecedented scale of wide-ranging financial support for businesses of all sizes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to feedback received, the Government introduced further support schemes particularly for smaller businesses that were finding it difficult to access the initial package. We are monitoring the impact that these measures are having in supporting public services, businesses and individuals, including the waterways sector.

## ■ Food: Origin Marking

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[49873]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring more detailed and extensive labelling of the country of origin on food products.

**Victoria Prentis:**

In the UK we maintain high standards on the provision of information to consumers on food labels. Food is a devolved matter so I am replying in respect of England. However, the same rules currently apply across all of the UK.

Our current laws require origin labelling for foods where the consumer would be misled if the origin of the food were not given. This might happen on the label of, for example, a food clearly identified as 'British' by words or symbols but that was made elsewhere.

In addition there are rules for compulsory origin labelling of single ingredient foods including beef, veal, lamb, mutton, pork, goat and poultry meat, fish and shellfish, honey, olive oil, wine and most fruit and vegetables.

As of April this year the country of origin or place of provenance of a primary ingredient which is not the same as that given or indicated on a food as a whole must also be included on the label. For example, if a steak and ale pie is made by the English Pie Company but its main ingredient (beef) is from Argentina, the label must make that clear to the consumer.

Where origin information is not required but a producer wishes to provide it, it can still be on the label as long as it does not mislead the consumer.

We believe these measures together ensure that UK consumers are well informed about the true origin of the food they are eating.

## ■ Horticulture: Coronavirus

**Munira Wilson:**

**[49859]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 42137, if his Department will bring forward a grant scheme for growers in the seasonal ornamental horticulture sector with small profit margins who have had to dispose of stock and will be unable to repay a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan or Bounce Back Loan scheme loan within six years.

**Munira Wilson:**

**[49860]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on growers in the ornamental horticulture sector.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Coronavirus represents a very significant challenge affecting daily life and every part of the economy, including the ornamental horticulture sector. The Government

continues to work closely with representatives from the horticulture supply chain, including the Horticultural Trades Association, to understand the short-term and long-term impacts on the sector and we are undertaking work to scope out options should they be required.

In May, Defra worked with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to introduce legislation which would allow garden centres to re-open. On 13 May, the Government announced that all garden centres in England which are able to adhere to social distancing measures were legally able to reopen. This measure has been widely welcomed by growers, garden centre owners and consumers.

The Government has made a wide-ranging package of measures available to ornamental horticulture businesses to support them through this difficult period and we continue to keep the situation under review. Legal powers were included in the Coronavirus Act 2020 enabling us to offer further financial support if we believe it is necessary.

#### ■ **Inland Waterways: Coronavirus**

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[48963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether waterways businesses will be eligible for the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund; and what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on that eligibility.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published detailed guidance for local authorities on the administration of the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund. The grant funding is specifically for small businesses that for whatever reason do not qualify for other COVID-19 support schemes. The guidance also sets out that the eligibility criteria for qualifying small businesses is not exhaustive, but is intended to illustrate for local authorities which types of business the Government considers should be a priority for the scheme.

Local authorities are encouraged to use this when deciding whether particular situations are broadly similar in nature to the examples given in the guidance and therefore eligible for grants, and to exercise their local knowledge and discretion to decide which cases to support, taking account of their relevance to the local economy. Waterways businesses are free to apply for grant funding.

#### ■ **Supermarkets: Coronavirus**

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[49617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how people shielding due to the covid-19 outbreak will be allocated supermarkets for priority deliveries; and whether those people will be offered a choice of supermarket where they are not an existing customer.



**Victoria Prentis:**

Defra is working closely with supermarkets to ensure that people who have registered with the Government as extremely clinically vulnerable and have indicated that they need help to access food are supported, by offering them emergency food parcels provided by the Government or by sharing data to facilitate priority access to online supermarket delivery slots. People can register with supermarkets where they were not previously customers in order to ensure that they can access the food and essential goods that they need.

■ **Zoos: Coronavirus****Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[49109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Government's funding support packages available to (a) aquariums and (b) zoos for the wellbeing of animals in zoos and aquariums during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Victoria Prentis:**

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend, the Member for North Devon, Selaine Saxby, on 27 April 2020, PQ 37936, and the reply given to the hon. Member for Dunfermline and West Fife, Douglas Chapman, on 11 May 2020, PQ 43675.

A £14 million Zoos Support Fund was launched on 4 May 2020. As of 1 June, Defra has received 80 applications from zoos and aquariums in England and has already awarded grants to zoos and aquariums to the value of almost £1.4 million. We continue to engage with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums and HM Treasury to monitor progress.

Defra officials have also been engaging with some of the largest zoos to discuss additional concerns about reduced visitor numbers and income over a longer time frame, and active consideration of these is ongoing.

Work is ongoing to understand how and when zoos, including safari parks, and aquariums, may be able to reopen in a safe way to the public whilst maintaining social distancing.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ **Bahrain: Coronavirus****Brendan O'Hara:**[\[48474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on ensuring that prisoners in that country can access (a) external hospital appointments and (b) other healthcare during the covid-19 pandemic.



**James Cleverly:**

The Government of Bahrain has been clear in public statements that access to appropriate medical care for those in detention is guaranteed by the Constitution of Bahrain. Bahrain has stated publicly that any prisoner wishing to see a doctor is taken to the prison clinic, with referral to specialist facilities where required. We have also been given categorical assurances privately. As part of the COVID-19 precautions, all medical consultations take place via a video call, ensuring the safety of the patient and the medical staff. We welcome these assurances from the Government of Bahrain and urge continued transparency.

We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to raise them with the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body. We continue to encourage the oversight bodies in Bahrain to carry out thorough and swift investigations into any such claims.

**Brendan O'Hara:**[\[49021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to my letter of 9 April 2020 to the Bahraini Ambassador to the UK and copied to the British Ambassador to Bahrain, if he will make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on the welfare all political prisoners who allege medical negligence against them during the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Cleverly:**

I refer the Honourable Member to my response of 2 June 2020 to question 48474.

**■ British Embassy Tehran****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[49081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether an agreement has been reached with Iran on compensating the UK for damage to the British embassy in Tehran in 2011.

**James Cleverly:**

Damage caused to the British embassy in Tehran in 2011 was a grave breach of the Vienna Convention. No agreement has been reached on compensation related to the damage. Iranian officials have apologised for the incident and the UK reopened our Embassy in Tehran in August 2015. We re-established full diplomatic relations in September the following year.

**■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus****Julie Elliott:**[\[48427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to assist the repatriation of UK citizens working on cruise ships during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

We recognise this is a worrying time for British crew on board cruise ships around the world. It is primarily the responsibility of their employers - the cruise ship operators - to ensure the welfare and safety of their crew.

Although no British national passengers remain on any cruise ships, we continue to work on the outstanding issue of supporting the return of British crew members. We are in direct contact with all of the main cruise ship operators, as well as with many crew members and their families. We will continue to support operators to ensure the welfare and safety of British crew. Our overseas missions are liaising closely with local authorities in an effort to facilitate disembarkation and ensure British crew can access flights home.

Not all British crew are seeking to return to the UK. Some may wish to stay with the ship (with their employer's consent), while others may be required by their role to do so as part of the minimum safe manning requirements for the vessel. This is a legislative and flag state requirement to ensure the continued seaworthiness of vessels.

**Bill Esterson:**[\[48973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the ability of UK citizens to travel abroad during the covid-19 outbreak in order to register the birth of surrogate babies and accompany them to the UK.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCO are assisting commissioning parents who have surrogacy arrangements overseas. We appreciate that Covid-19 has brought new challenges to what can already be a difficult and complex process. Our Embassies are liaising closely with the relevant Ministries of Foreign Affairs to support commissioning parents entering countries to collect children born through surrogacy. The FCO is also working with the Home Office and Her Majesty's Passport Office to temporarily expedite applications for Emergency Travel Documents for children born through surrogacy who have been affected by travel restrictions, where the nationality requirements and other mandatory checks have been met.

We continue to advise against non-essential international travel at this time, due to the risk of travel restrictions and transport availability changing at short notice. We encourage commissioning parents who decide they need to travel to sign up to Travel Advice email alerts for their destination country, and to follow relevant social media accounts to see our latest advice

**Lisa Nandy:**[\[48974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2020 to Question 46636 on British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus, how much of the £75 million fund announced on 30 March 2020 for repatriating UK nationals was been spent in each week between the 30 March 2020 and the 18 May 2020; and if he will provide a breakdown of how that spending was allocated.

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[49670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish the cost of each of the 151 charter flights organised by the Foreign Office to bring UK travellers back to the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Government has committed up to £75 million to help thousands of British travellers return home and this work is ongoing. A proportion of this commitment has been spent to date across the repatriation effort - not only directly on the transport required to get people home - including charter flights to the UK - but also the costs of ground transport and internal flights to get people to the departure airport. As with all spend, we are committed to ensuring value of money for the taxpayer. Provision of a detailed breakdown at this point would impact ongoing and future tenders for charter flights and include currently commercially sensitive information.

#### ■ **British Overseas Territories: Marine Protected Areas**

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[49117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many of the UK's Overseas Territory Blue Belt marine protected areas have published and are implementing marine protected area management plans.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK's Overseas Territories Blue Belt initiative is on track to deliver over 4 million square kilometres of protected ocean during this year. Of the Marine Protected Areas which have been designated to date, St Helena and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands have adopted and published Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Management Plans. The British Indian Ocean Territory has developed an internal conservation plan which guides activities. The South Orkney Islands Southern Shelf MPA, in British Antarctic Territory waters, is managed through the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. Ascension Island and Pitcairn are in the process of developing their Management Plans, with the support of the Blue Belt team.

#### ■ **Crimes against Humanity: Victims**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[48430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help ensure accountability for victims of (a) war crimes and (b) crimes against humanity in (i) Sri Lanka and (b) overseas.

**Nigel Adams:**

The British Government regularly engages with international partners on the importance of truth, accountability and justice for all victims of the civil war in Sri Lanka. At the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, the UK works closely with the Core Group on Sri Lanka, and made clear our continued support for justice for victims of conflict in a joint statement delivered at the UNHRC in February. While

in Geneva in February, Minister of State for South Asia Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon met with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena to underline this message, and the Foreign Secretary raised the importance of accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka during a call with Foreign Minister Gunawardena in May.

The British High Commission in Colombo also regularly engages with international partners on this important issue. The UK has long supported Sri Lanka's accountability commitments made to the UNHRC through resolutions 30/1, 34/1 and 40/1 as the best way to establish truth regarding alleged crimes committed by all sides during the Sri Lankan civil war, as well as to achieve accountability and reconciliation. We continue to underline the importance of accountability, justice and reconciliation in our engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka. Supporting international criminal justice continues to be a fundamental element of the UK's foreign policy. The UK is one of the foremost contributors to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international tribunals, which can play a key role in deterring future acts, supporting victims, and helping to establish accountability around the globe. The UK has provided both practical and financial support to the ICC, contributing £10.2 million, and working with the Court on sentence enforcement. The UK has also been at the forefront of international efforts to gather and analyse evidence of atrocities in conflict affected areas such as Myanmar, Syria, and Iraq.

#### ■ Croatia: Asylum

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[49671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in Croatia on that country's continued international obligations towards asylum seekers and refugees.

**Wendy Morton:**

We recognise the challenge faced by Croatia in dealing with increased migrant flows. However, we are also concerned about the treatment of migrants at the Croatian border. The UK is committed to the principle that asylum seekers, whilst subject to immigration processes of other countries or awaiting the outcome of an asylum application, are entitled to decent, humane and fair treatment. The UK Government regularly engages in dialogue with the EU and international partners on a variety of issues related to the need to address irregular migration and the challenges it presents.

#### ■ Emergency Powers: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[48431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he has taken to help coordinate an international response to the potential state misuse of emergency powers during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK is aware of and concerned by reports of measures taken by some countries in response to the Coronavirus outbreak that may unduly restrict human rights or have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable or marginalised groups. All States must ensure they respect their human rights obligations in responding to Coronavirus.

Through our international engagement, we have made clear that any actions taken which may restrict certain human rights, for example freedom of assembly or association, must be lawful, non-discriminatory, targeted, time-limited, and subject to regular review to ensure they remain strictly necessary as a response to Coronavirus. The Foreign Secretary issued a statement with his French, German and Dutch counterparts to mark World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, in which he emphasised the need to "oppose all attempts by any state to use the pandemic to adopt restrictions on press freedom, silence debate, abuse journalists or spread information". On 20 May, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State with responsibility for Human Rights, discussed with Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the critical importance of working together to ensure everyone's human rights are protected in responding to COVID-19, and welcomed plans for the Human Rights Council to resume in June.

Our Ambassadors to multilateral institutions in New York, Geneva, Strasbourg and Vienna have all raised the importance of human rights in States' response to Coronavirus. We also support the call the UN Secretary-General made when launching his policy brief on COVID-19 and human rights on 22 April that human rights must be at the front and centre of the Coronavirus response and recovery. The UK Government remains committed to standing up for human rights and supports all efforts by the UN to minimise long-term damage to global economies, societies, politics and freedoms.

**■ Grenada: Coronavirus****Mr Laurence Robertson:**[\[48259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of British citizens in Grenada awaiting repatriation as a result of the covid-19 pandemic; what steps are being taken to repatriate those people; and if he will make a statement.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is working around the clock, through our Posts overseas and in London, to make sure all British travellers who need and want to return to the UK are receiving the support and information they need. The number of British travellers that may still require support to return home across the globe is now in the low tens of thousands. It is difficult to be more precise because there have been instances of multiple registrations by the same individual, people not reporting their return to the UK via other means, and long term residents registering for flights even though they were not eligible. We have brought home over 32,000 people on 155 flights organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 29 countries

and territories. We have also supported over 11,000 people to return home from the Caribbean via commercial means.

We are aware of pockets of British travellers across the Eastern Caribbean area, including in Grenada, and our effort is focused on supporting their return as quickly and safely as possible. We are sharing information with British travellers affected through our Travel Advice page and will update them as we have news.

We have lobbied airlines and the local authorities to keep routes out of Grenada open for as long as possible, allowing nearly all short-term visitors to leave. We also promoted details of departure options from Grenada on our social media platforms.

Our consular network in the region continues to provide support to British nationals who require assistance.

## ■ India: Coronavirus

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[47181]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that people stranded in India are able to return after the conclusion of the covid-19 repatriation flights on 15 May 2020; and what steps he is taking to include in those plans people who have indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2020]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is working around the clock, through our Posts overseas and in London, to make sure all British people who need help are receiving the support and information they need. We have brought home over 32,000 people on 153 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 29 countries and territories. As of 19 May, we have brought home over 14,900 people from 11 locations in India on over 64 charter flights.

While there are currently no further flights scheduled, we will keep this under review and continue to assess both demand for flights and the situation in India. Following the completion of the latest phase of flights on May 15, our consular teams are supporting British travellers who have not been able to fly for a range of reasons.

We are seeking to help vulnerable non-British UK residents with indefinite leave to remain (ILR) where possible. This goes beyond what we usually do, since our consular assistance is for UK nationals. However, recognising the exceptional challenge of COVID-19 and that many people who call the UK home want to get back, we are seeking to help vulnerable people with ILR wherever possible so long as they have lived in the UK within the last year.

The Indian Government has announced that British travellers in India wishing to return to the UK will also be able to book seats on their outbound flights from India to the UK being utilised to repatriate people back to India. British travellers are encouraged to subscribe to the UK's travel advice updates for India to receive the latest information on return flights: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/india/return-to-the-uk>

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[48636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help Indian nationals who are ordinarily resident in the UK to return from India during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Adams:**

Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open.

As of 19 May, we have bought back over 14,600 British travellers from India on 64 flights since 8 April. We do not have any further charter flights planned, though we continue to keep this under review. Our objective remains to bring home British travellers who want to return to the UK, as soon as possible. From the outset, our priority for the charter flight programme has been getting British travellers home. But after we launched the charter flight programme, it became clear that there are people with indefinite leave to remain (ILR) who normally reside in the UK, and want to get back, particularly in India and Pakistan. Where possible, we are working to help vulnerable UK residents with ILR provided that they have lived in the UK within the last year. This is beyond the scope of our standard consular assistance, which is usually just for UK nationals, but these are exceptional times.

## ■ Iran: Detainees

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[49077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent additional British citizens being imprisoned for the purpose of diplomatic leverage in Iran.

**James Cleverly:**

The safety and security of British citizens in Iran is of paramount importance, and we call on Iran to uphold its commitments under international law to treat all detainees in line with international standards. The Foreign Secretary continues to raise his concerns over arbitrary detentions, most recently with Foreign Minister Zarif on 16 March. Our Ambassador to Iran has consistently raised this issue with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will continue to lobby the Iranian Government at the most senior level for the urgent release of all dual national detainees on humanitarian grounds. The FCO advise against all but essential travel to Iran. However, for British-Iranian dual nationals the FCO continue to advise against all travel to Iran.

## ■ Israel: West Bank

**Colum Eastwood:**

[\[48669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart since the formation of the new Israeli Government on the illegal occupation of the West Bank and the proposed annexation of territory.



**James Cleverly:**

We made clear our concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement, which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank, at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May. The Foreign Secretary reiterated this message during a call with Israeli Alternate Prime Minister Gantz on 20 May. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions which make peace more difficult.

■ **Jamaica: Coronavirus****John Spellar:**[\[48266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many people (a) applied for and (b) were given a seat on the special flight from Kingston, Jamaica to London on 7 May 2020 organised in response to the covid-19 pandemic; what estimate he has made of the number of people still seeking to return to the UK from that country; and what steps are being taken to facilitate the return of people to the UK from that country.

**Wendy Morton:**

Over 200 people travelled on the special flight out of Jamaica on 8 May. It is difficult to be precise on the number of people who register for flights because there have been instances of multiple registrations by the same individual, people not reporting their return to the UK via other means, and long term residents registering for flights even though they were not eligible. Limited indirect commercial flights are currently the only options available in Jamaica for travel to the UK. The Government remains focused on supporting the remaining British travellers in Jamaica. We continue to look at ways to assist British travellers who wish to return to the UK, so that we can support them to get home as quickly and safely as possible. Prior to 7 May, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office assisted over 4,000 people who were short term visitors to Jamaica to return home to the UK on commercial flights.

■ **Kashmir: Politics and Government****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[48403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Government of India on Kashmir; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are in regular contact with the Indian Government regarding the situation in Kashmir. The Foreign Secretary most recently spoke about Kashmir with India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar on 20 April. Our longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to identify a lasting, political resolution that takes into account



the wishes of the Kashmiri people. It is not for the UK to mediate or prescribe a solution.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

**David Linden:**

**[49809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when the Minister for Asia plans to respond to the letter of 7 April 2020 from the hon. Member for Glasgow East, reference DL5327, regarding his constituents who are stranded in the Philippines.

**Nigel Adams:**

This has been a time of unparalleled demand for consular support across the globe, and we have experienced an unprecedented volume of incoming correspondence from worried families and MPs asking for information about the status of their families and constituents. I apologise for the delay in responding to your letter of 7 April and confirm that a response was sent to your office on 21 May.

■ **Mubarak Bala**

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[49700]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Nigerian counterpart on the arrest of the President of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, Mubarak Bala.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government, along with international partners, is monitoring the arrest of Mubarak Bala closely. The Nigerian authorities are yet to confirm the charges against Mr Bala. I raised Mr Bala's case with the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs during our call on 21 May. Our High Commission in Abuja is discussing the case with the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Police.

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rehman Chishti MP, is also personally looking into Mr Bala's case on an urgent basis, and has raised this matter with international counterparts. On 6 May, Mr Chishti spoke with the Chief Executive of Humanists UK and stressed the UK's engagement on this case. The Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, also discussed Mr Bala's case with the Chief Executive on 20 May.

We will continue to stress the importance of a transparent investigation that respects Mr Bala's human rights, the rule of law, and the Nigerian constitutional right to freedom of religion or belief. Defending freedom of religion or belief for all remains a UK policy priority and we will continue to use our voice internationally to protect this human right, championed by Mr Chishti.

**■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe****Tulip Siddiq:** [\[49078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Leader of the House of 13 May 2020, Official Report, column 272, that it is important that Iran is held to account for its treatment of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, what steps he plans to take in the next three months to hold Iran accountable for its continuing arbitrary detention and leverage of Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe and other British nationals.

**James Cleverly:**

The permanent release of all arbitrarily detained dual nationals in Iran and their return to their families in the UK remains our top priority. While the further extension of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's temporary release is a welcome step, we continue to urge Iran to make it permanent so she can return to her family in the UK and will continue to raise this at the highest levels with Iran. The Foreign Secretary raised it with Foreign Minister Zarif on 16 March and our Ambassador to Iran has consistently raised it with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will continue to consider using all the diplomatic and legal tools available to us.

**■ Overseas Workers****Julie Elliott:** [\[48426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens working abroad.

**Nigel Adams:**

We do not register British nationals abroad, and therefore do not have numbers of British nationals working overseas.

**■ Punjab: Coronavirus****Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[48576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of UK nationals stranded in (a) Amritsar and (b) Punjab; and what steps he is taking to repatriate them.

**Nigel Adams:**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is working around the clock, through our Posts overseas and in London, to make sure all British travellers who need and want to return to the UK are receiving the support and information they need. We have now brought home over 33,600 people on 162 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 32 countries and territories.

India is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with both airlines and the government of India to ensure British travellers can return home.

As of 26 May, we have brought home over 17,000 people from 11 locations in India, including Amritsar and Punjab. These have carried almost all of those in India who

registered, are eligible, and took up the option of a flight when given the chance to do so. We continue to review and assess both the demand for flights and the situation in India and our consular teams are supporting British travellers who have not been able to fly.

■ **South Asia: Coronavirus**

**Stephen Timms:**

**[48251]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the covid-19 pandemic, how many UK nationals registered an interest with his Department by 19 April 2020 to return to the UK from (a) India, (b) Pakistan and (c) Bangladesh; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes globally - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. Additionally we have brought home over 32,000 people on 155 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 29 countries and territories. The number of British travellers that may still require support to return home across the globe is now in the low tens of thousands. It is difficult to be more precise because there have been instances of multiple registrations by the same individual, people not reporting their return to the UK via other means, and long term residents registering for flights even though they were not eligible.

Repatriating British travellers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with both airlines and the governments of each of those countries to ensure British travellers can return home. We have worked with international allies to lobby authorities to keep commercial air routes open and work together to return travellers globally. Where commercial flights have not been available, the UK Government has organised charter flights. As of 19 May we have arranged 64 charter flights from India and 21 from Pakistan which have repatriated more than 19,000 British travellers in total. 1,600 British travellers have been repatriated from Bangladesh.

Our High Commissions are providing consular assistance to those who need it, including the most vulnerable, and are continuing to provide regular updates on social media. We encourage British travellers to subscribe to our travel service updates: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

**Stephen Timms:**

**[48252]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2020 to Question 43580 on South Asia: Coronavirus, how many UK nationals who registered an interest by 19 April 2020 to return from (a) India, (b) Pakistan and (c) Bangladesh were categorised as vulnerable; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

Repatriating British travellers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with the government of each country and airlines to ensure British travellers can return home. As of 19 May, we have arranged 64 charter flights from India and 21 from Pakistan which have repatriated more than 19,000 British travellers. Over 1,600 British travellers have been repatriated from Bangladesh. These have carried almost all of those who registered, are eligible, and took up the option of a flight when given the chance to do so. The small numbers who are unable to travel are being looked after by our consular teams in region.

We reserve as many seats as possible on all flights for the most vulnerable British nationals - these are our top priority. It is difficult to be more precise because there have been instances of multiple registrations by the same individual, people not reporting their return to the UK via other means, and people registering for flights even though they were not eligible.

**Stephen Timms:**[\[48253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his oral contribution of 11 May 2020, Official Report, column 12 on repatriation, how many of the 30,000 British nationals who returned on the 141 flights chartered from 27 countries and territories were from (a) India, (b) Pakistan and (c) Bangladesh; and if he will make a statement.

**Nigel Adams:**

Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. As of 19 May, we have brought back over 32,000 people on 155 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 29 countries and territories.

Repatriating British travellers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with both airlines and the governments of each of those countries to ensure British travellers can return home. We have worked with international allies to lobby authorities to keep commercial air routes open and work together to return travellers globally.

As of 19 May we have arranged 64 charter flights from India and 21 from Pakistan which have repatriated more than 19,000 British travellers. Over 1,600 British travellers have been repatriated from Bangladesh.

**Venezuela: Coronavirus****Anthony Browne:**[\[49135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has plans to arrange a repatriation flight from Venezuela for UK residents that have been unable to secure a commercial flight to the UK via Mexico.

**Wendy Morton:**

Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. Additionally we have brought home over 32,000 people on 155 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 29 countries and territories.

The remaining British travellers in Venezuela have access to intermittent commercial flights via Mexico. In addition, our Embassy in Caracas has supported the return of British travellers requiring assistance through additional charter flights via Europe and Mexico operated by our international partners. Our travel advice and social media pages are also regularly updated to ensure that those wishing to return are aware of further developments: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/venezuela>.

**Vepa Matyakubov****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[49030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Turkmenistan on the release from prison of Vepa Matyakubov as a result of the risk of contracting covid-19 in that prison.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are aware of the case of Vepa Matyakubov, and are concerned by further reports that Turkmenistan has imprisoned a number of conscientious objectors to military service. The FCO, including through our Embassy in Ashgabat, has raised and will continue to raise with the Turkmen authorities the importance of taking steps to protect and respect individuals' rights to exercise freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression. Our Embassy in Ashgabat remain in close contact with the Turkmen authorities about COVID-19 prevention measures, and continue to monitor the situation closely.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****Cancer: Rotherham****Alexander Stafford:**[\[40814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mental health support he is making available to people living with cancer in Rotherham CCG whose treatment has been interrupted by the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government and the National Health Service recognise that the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on some people living with cancer can be significant.

Mental health services across England have remained open for business throughout the pandemic and mental health providers have been working hard to ensure that all those who need them have access to mental health services. This includes instructing mental health trusts to establish all-age 24 hours a day, seven days a week crisis helplines and issuing guidance to trusts on staff training, prioritisation of services and how to maximise use of digital and virtual channels to keep delivering support to patients.

■ **Care Homes: Coronavirus**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[48361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care home residents were tested for covid-19 in each week from 2 March 2020 to 4 May 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The information is not available in the format requested. Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 125,000 workers in care settings and over 118,000 care home residents have been tested through Departmental and Public Health England testing routes.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[48362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care home employees were tested for covid-19 in each week from 2 March 2020 to 4 May 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The data is not held in the format requested. Since the start of the pandemic, over 198,000 workers in care settings and over 177,000 care home residents have been tested through Departmental and Public Health England testing routes.

**Stella Creasy:** [\[48981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when residents of care homes in England will be able to receive visitors; and what testing plan for visitors will be put in place to ensure the safety of residents and staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department, Public Health England, the Care Quality Commission and the National Health Service have published guidance on the care of residents in care homes. This includes guidance on visiting.

While we have recommended that family and friends should be advised not to visit care homes, we are clear that there may be exceptional situations where visits are appropriate. During these visits, appropriate infection control precautions should be followed.

We know how difficult it is for residents and their families to have their visits restricted and we will continue to review our guidance in line with the latest scientific advice and engage with stakeholders to ensure we address the majority of their concerns.

## ■ Care Homes: Hospitals

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[48943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many residents of (a) care homes and (b) nursing homes were admitted to NHS hospitals in England in (i) March and (ii) April 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

Information is not available in the format requested.

## ■ Care Homes: Standards

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[48304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will establish a helpline for careworkers to raise concerns on (a) the operation of the care home they work for and (b) its treatment of (i) staff and (ii) patients.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Speak Up Direct is a helpline and website operated by Social Enterprise Direct and funded by the Department with the current contract in place since 2017. It provides workers in social care and the National Health Service with guidance on how to register their concerns, including where to speak up about the operations of care homes and the treatment of staff and patients.

Speaking up is vital for ensuring patient safety and improving the quality of services and we will continue to encourage and support the right of workers to raise concerns.

## ■ Coronavirus: Babies

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[49114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of babies born with covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

It is not yet possible to say whether any babies have been born in the United Kingdom with COVID-19. With funding from the National Institute for Health Research, the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit are using the UK Obstetric Surveillance System to determine the incidence of hospitalisation with pandemic COVID-19 infection in pregnancy and assess the outcomes of pandemic COVID-19 in pregnancy for mother and infant.

The initial analysis of the data published on 11 May, found that of the 247 women admitted to hospitals in the UK between 1 March and 14 April 2020, six infants tested positive for SARS CoV 2 RNA within the first 12 hours after birth.



## ■ Coronavirus: Charities

**Sir Edward Davey:** [48940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department is applying to health and social care charities for the funding allotted by the Government for charities in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Sir Edward Davey:** [48941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the £360 million Government funding for the charity sector in response to covid-19 outbreak, whether his Department has received an allocation of that funding; what discussions his Department is having with charities in the health and social care sector on that funding; and what the criteria are for applying for that funding.

**Edward Argar:**

On 8 April 2020 the Chancellor announced £750 million to support the charity sector in response to COVID-19 with £360 million to be allocated by central Government to charities in England based on evidence of service need. The initial announcement set out that up to £200 million of the total was support for hospices.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has been working with other Government departments to identify other charities that are critical to the COVID-19 response and to agree funding. On 22 May a further announcement was made which detailed the health and social care charities that would be in receipt of a further £22 million of that funding at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/22-million-awarded-to-life-saving-health-charities-during-virus-outbreak>

The Department of Health and Social Care is engaging with the relevant charities directly to ensure the money goes out to the charities as quickly as possible.

## ■ Coronavirus: Computer Software

**Caroline Lucas:** [49645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) data sharing agreements were entered into and (b) data impact assessments were conducted on potential work with (i) Microsoft, (ii) Palantir Technologies UK, (iii) Faculty, (iv) Google and (v) Amazon Web Services on the covid-19 datastore.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England is the data controller for data processed in the NHS Data Store. Data is not 'shared' with organisations who are working under contract on the NHS Data Store and, as such, there are no data sharing agreements required. The organisations contracted by NHS England to act as data processors have access to the data but can only process it under instruction from NHS England which is included in their contracts.



Further information on the organisations involved, the contracts in place and their level of access to the data can be found on the NHS Data Store Privacy Notice which is being published by NHS England imminently.

The Data Protection Impact Assessment for the NHS Data Store has been completed and is also being published imminently.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[49646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) contracts and (b) value of those contracts with (i) Microsoft, (ii) Palantir Technologies UK, (iii) Faculty, (iv) Google and (v) Amazon Web Services for work related to the covid-19 datastore.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have contracted Palantir, Microsoft and Amazon Web Services to work on the NHS COVID-19 Data Store. The Department has contracted Faculty to work on the NHS COVID-19 Data Store. Google is not currently undertaking work for the NHS COVID-19 Data Store.

Procurement Regulations require the publication of Contract Award Notices, containing information on the final agreed value of the contract, in the Official Journal of the European Union and we publish certain information on Contracts Finder about contracts awarded.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[49647]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria will be used to decide when to close the covid-19 datastore, how the closure of that datastore will be implemented; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that the private companies involved destroy or return data when that store is closed.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England is the sole controller of data held within the National Health Service COVID-19 data store and for any data legally shared with them. The organisations contracted by NHS England to act as data processors have access to the data but can only process it under instruction from NHS England which is included in their contracts.

The data will only be retained within the NHS COVID-19 data store and processed for as long as it is required for the purposes of the response to COVID-19.

Any use of the data in the future for research in the public interest, for example, further work to understand the spread of infectious diseases, in order to strengthen our readiness to respond to a future event, or by the NHS for planning and delivering services, beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic will be subject to any approvals required under law.

**■ Coronavirus: Death****Charlotte Nichols:****[43770]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the level of under-counting of deaths from covid-19 on death certificates; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Weekly Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on deaths involving COVID-19 refer to deaths where COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, including in combination with other health conditions. If a death certificate mentions COVID-19 it will not always be the main cause of death but may be a contributory factor.

The data quality of death certificates is dependent on the correct identification and registration of the cause, or causes, of death by medical practitioners. More information on the publication of ONS mortality rates can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/methodologies/userguidetomortalitystatisticsjuly2017#registration-of-deaths>

**■ Coronavirus: Death Certificates****Sarah Champion:****[48466]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to cases where death from covid-19 is linked to an underlying health condition, whether both conditions as causes of death are recorded on death certificates.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

In response to the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to death certification, the General Register Office/Home Office and the Office for National Statistics published revised guidance to medical practitioners completing medical certificates cause of death (MCCD) for a period of emergency. Medical practitioners are expected to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief. This guidance confirms that COVID-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the MCCD.

The MCCD is set out in two parts, in accordance with World Health Organization recommendations in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. Starting with the immediate, direct cause of death in part one, going back through the sequence of events or conditions that led to death on subsequent lines, until reaching the one that started the fatal sequence. Part two of the certificate should include any other diseases, injuries, conditions, or events that contributed to the death, but were not part of the direct sequence.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[48335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that all local authorities receive guidance on covid-19 local contact tracing initiatives.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Local authorities are a key part of contact tracing and are working with the NHS Test and Trace service. Public Health England and representatives from the local government sector are developing the details of key aspects of the testing and tracing service, focused especially on local outbreak management.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[48575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason covid-19 contact tracing volunteers are required to be registered with the UK Public Health Register; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of broadening eligibility for those volunteers to people with public health qualifications.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Contact tracing, as part of the NHS Test and Trace service, will be delivered by a mixture of health professionals and call handlers. Call handlers are not required to be registered with any professional body. Health professionals are required to have current registration with a relevant professional body given their role in supporting call handlers and engagement with the public with COVID-19 symptoms.

## ■ Coronavirus: Eating Disorders

**Scott Benton:**

[\[49130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's timescale is for reviewing restrictions on day patient care for people with eating disorders during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Mental health services, including eating disorder services have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic and are continuing to support people with eating disorder issues.

Services across the country are adapting their protocols, as needed, to ensure that medical monitoring continues in way that is safe for both patients and workforce. Examples of adaptation include using dedicated rooms with strict cleaning timetables for weighing patients, working with primary care or local neighbouring teams to undertake measurements and utilising digital means or telephone or video consultations to share information between clinicians and people with eating disorders.

Services are adapting delivery of evidenced based therapies, as clinically appropriate to do so, to provide ongoing support and treatment and keep people with eating disorders engaged during this time.

## ■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[49819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) support and (b) protect BAME (i) NHS staff and (ii) other key workers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department has commissioned Public Health England to complete a rapid review to understand disparities in COVID-19 infection across the population. This will include looking at the impact on different ethnic groups and occupations - as well as by deprivation, age, and sex. The report will suggest recommendations for further steps that should be taken to reduce disparities in risk and outcomes from COVID-19 on the population.

In advance of Public Health England's review, and on a precautionary basis, NHS England and NHS Improvement have recommended that all National Health Service organisations undertake appropriate risk assessments for their Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and make appropriate arrangements to support and protect them. The Department is also working to support the care sector to ensure the safety of all staff in social care.

All NHS and social care staff can access emotional, psychological and practical support.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[48442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the Roche antibody test will contribute to the Government strategy on easing the covid-19 lockdown.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Availability of reliable antibody tests are a major boost in the United Kingdom's battle against COVID-19.

While these tests cannot tell us if someone is 'immune' to the COVID-19 virus and as such, it is vital that we all continue to follow social distancing guidelines, antibody testing has a critical role to play in helping us to learn more about how the immune system responds to infection and how the virus has spread across the country.

The UK Government is currently undertaking some of the biggest seroprevalence surveys in the world to gain answers to these critical scientific questions – and eventually, such studies could mean more of us are able to return to our normal lives with greater confidence that we will not infect – or be infected – by others.

**■ Coronavirus: Tyne and Wear****Chi Onwurah:**[\[48997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 track and trace staff are based in Tyne and Wear.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Contract tracing is delivered through partnerships between Public Health England, NHS Professionals and commercial call handling companies, and the local authorities. The public health workforce for each local authority is a matter for them to determine and this varies according to the size of each authority.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Consultants****Layla Moran:**[\[49815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse was of consultants advising his Department in each financial year from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department's expenditure on consultancy services, for each of the available financial years is shown in the following table:

| FINANCIAL YEAR | CONSULTANCY SERVICES (£000s) |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 2017-18        | 12,402                       |
| 2018-19        | 19,829                       |

Figures for 2019-20 are not available as they are still subject to audit. Figures for 2020-21 will be available in July 2021.

**■ Department of Health and Social Care: Correspondence****Marion Fellows:**[\[49732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average length of time was for Ministers of his Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Edward Argar:**

In line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Department has a target of responding to correspondence within 18 working days, where a response is required.

The Department is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. The Department ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

### ■ Eating Disorders: Coronavirus

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

**[48282]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of (a) isolation and (b) public information messages not to go out shopping often during the covid-19 outbreak on people with eating disorders; and what additional support his Department is providing to those people while specialist facilities are closed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have not made an assessment of the effect of isolation on people with eating disorders. However, mental health services, including eating disorder services have remained open during COVID-19 and are working around the clock to support people with eating disorder issues through the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond. Where people with eating disorders need support, they should contact their general practitioner or (if receiving care from NHS services) local community eating disorder service or mental health crisis service.

Community eating disorder services are deploying innovative digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support, assessment and treatment. They are also adapting the delivery of evidence-based therapies, where it is clinically appropriate to do so, to provide ongoing support and treatment and keep people with eating disorders engaged during this time.

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

### ■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

**Marsha De Cordova:**

**[49113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of covid-19 on BAME pregnant women.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

A new national collaborative study has just begun to help guide the prevention and management of COVID-19 in pregnant women and their infants. The study, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, will use the [UK Obstetric Surveillance System](#) to collect information about all pregnant women admitted to hospital who are confirmed to have the virus infection including the influence of demographic characteristics on outcomes for mother and infant. The information will be analysed to inform ongoing guidance for women and maternity staff as we respond to the pandemic.

It is known that some viral infections are worse in pregnant women but at the moment, there is no evidence that this is the case for COVID-19, but the amount of evidence available is still quite limited.

## ■ Ethnic Groups: Maternity Services

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[49115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce racial disparities in maternal healthcare.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan to rolling out continuity of carer will ensure that thousands of women receive safe and personal maternity care, improving outcomes for both mother and baby, and reducing health inequalities.

By 2024, 75% of women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, and a similar percentage of women from the most deprived groups, will receive this continuity of care from their midwife throughout pregnancy, labour and the postnatal period, as a key part of our ambition to achieve 50% reductions in stillbirth, mother and child deaths and serious brain injury.

## ■ Health Services: Immigrants

**Stephen Timms:**

[49572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much revenue accrued to the public purse from payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge in the most recent year for which data is available.

**Edward Argar:**

The latest figures available taken from page 137 of the Home Office Annual Reports 2018/19 state "other income" (expressed in £000s) of £251,220 for Core Department and Agencies and £46,707 for Core Department and Agencies (payable to Consolidated Fund) for 2018/19.

Data are available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807126/6.5571\\_HO\\_Annual\\_Report\\_201920\\_WEB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807126/6.5571_HO_Annual_Report_201920_WEB.PDF)

**Stephen Timms:**

[49573]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the monies that will be accrued to his Department from payments of the Immigration Health Surcharge in financial year 2021-22.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not currently available in the format requested.

**■ Maternity Services: Negligence****Jeremy Hunt:**[\[48341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS spent on maternity litigation claims in 2018-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS Resolution manages clinical negligence and other claims against the National Health Service in England.

NHS Resolution spent £952 million on clinical negligence claims relating to NHS maternity services in 2018/19. This represented around 40% of total clinical negligence spend relating to NHS services in 2018/19.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[48307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of demand for mental health services for children and young people since the start of the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps his Department is taking to (a) mitigate and (b) manage demand during that outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Mental health providers are offering support to children and young people using digital and remote approaches to continue assessment and treatment as part of the wider support across the whole system supporting children and young people including education settings, local authorities, the voluntary care sector and other services.

We are working with the National Health Service and Public Health England, service users, academics and the voluntary sector to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19 and plan for how to support the public's mental health and wellbeing throughout the 'recovery' phase.

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[48308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to achieve the goal set out in the NHS Long Term Plan of ensuring that all children and young people who need specialist mental health care can access it.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We remain committed to delivering the ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan, building on the progress to date. The National Health Service is on track to deliver its end 2020/21 target for expanding children and young people's specialist services and is on track to deliver the roll-out of mental health support teams in schools and colleges across 20-25% of areas in England by 2023/24.

Supporting children and young people's mental health during and after the pandemic is a priority for the NHS and providers are offering support using digital and remote



approaches to continue assessment and treatment during social distancing measures.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[49648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) level of demand during the covid-19 restrictions and (b) potential level of demand as those restrictions are lifted for children and young people's mental health services; and what steps he is taking to ensure that that service provision is able to meet demand.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Supporting children and young people's mental health during and after the pandemic is a priority. Mental health providers are offering support using digital and remote approaches to continue assessment and treatment during social distancing measures. This is part of the wider support across the whole system supporting children and young people including education settings, local authorities, the voluntary care sector and other services working in partnership to support children and young people's mental health.

We are working with the National Health Service and Public Health England, service users, academics and the voluntary sector to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19 and plan for how to support the public's mental health and wellbeing throughout the 'recovery' phase.

#### ■ **Mental Health Services: Prisons**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[46584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of prisoners who have assessed mental health needs that would normally receive a psychiatric healthcare response received that response during (a) March, (b) April and (c) May 2020 to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[46585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of prisoners who have assessed mental health needs that would normally receive a pharmaceutical prescription received that healthcare in (a) March, (b) April and (c) May 2020 to date; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The information is not available in the required format.

#### ■ **NHS: Computer Software**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[48415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when data stored centrally by the NHSX Covid Tracking app will be deleted.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Any data shared with the National Health Service as part of the public health emergency and stored centrally, may be retained and used in the future for research in the public interest, providing care, and public health management whilst complying with all the necessary legislation. We will not hold data for any longer than is needed.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[49093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the source code of the server used for the NHS covid-19 tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Alongside the code for the app, we have already published documentation which sets out the full application and system architecture. The data protection impact assessment lists the data processors and their roles. We will make further code available subject to security and operational requirements.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[49094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, (a) for what reason he has not published and (b) if he will publish an unredacted version of the risk section of the NHSX Contact Tracing App Isle of Wight Data Protection Impact Assessment; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

In line with our transparency commitment, we published the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) on 7 May 2020. It is a technical document that contains sensitive information and, as is usual with a DPIA of this nature, some sections require limited redaction for security reasons.

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[49649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the validity of the Ernst & Young estimate that NHS data could be worth £9.6 billion to the taxpayer; what steps he is taking to prevent private companies involved in the covid-19 datastore using NHS data for commercial purposes; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England is the data controller for data processed in the NHS Data Store. Organisations involved have access to the data but can only process it under instruction from NHS England. As such, the data is not being shared with private companies for commercial purposes and a statement is not required.

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[49675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timescale is for launching the NHSX Covid Tracking App throughout the UK.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The National Health Service COVID-19 app is one element of a wider programme and will work alongside online and phone-based contact tracing services. The app is important in reaching contacts the individuals may not know or recall, and in getting

notifications out faster than would otherwise be possible. Roll out of the app will take place in the coming weeks, as part of the launch and roll out of the wider programme.

## ■ NHS: Conditions of Employment

**James Murray:**

[\[49132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) cleaners, (b) porters, (c) patient transport staff and (d) other outsourced NHS workers are eligible for the life assurance scheme for NHS and social care workers who die as a result of covid-19, announced on 27 April 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government has launched a life assurance scheme for frontline National Health Service and social care staff. The scheme is non-contributory and pays a £60,000 lump sum where staff who had been recently working where personal care is provided to individuals who have contracted COVID-19 die as a result of the virus.

Cleaners, porters, patient transport staff and other outsourced NHS workers are eligible for the scheme, providing they satisfy the scheme eligibility criteria and were exposed to a high risk of contracting COVID-19, in circumstances where they could not reasonably avoid that risk because of the nature and location of their work.

As well as NHS employees, the scheme also covers staff who work for organisations that support the delivery of NHS services or work on an NHS contract, such as agency staff.

## ■ NHS: Voluntary Work

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[49755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS volunteers have engaged in at (a) one, (b) two, (c) five, (d) ten and (e) more than 11 assignments.

**Helen Whately:**

We do not hold this information in the format requested.

## ■ Palantir: Contracts

**Damian Collins:**

[\[48387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the terms of reference of the (a) current and (b) former contracts between his Department or its executive agencies and (i) Palantir and (ii) connected or subsidiary businesses of Palantir.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England will be publishing the contract for the NHS Data Store with Palantir in due course.

**Damian Collins:** [48389]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the statement of works from the contract between the NHS and Palantir.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The statement of work between NHS England and Palantir for the NHS Data Store is noted in a section of the full contract, which will be published in due course.

#### ■ **Palantir: Data Protection**

**Damian Collins:** [48388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data has been made available by his Department to Palantir in relation to that company's contract with the NHS; and (a) where and (b) by whom that data is processed.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England is the data controller for data processed in the NHS Data Store.

Palantir is engaged by NHS England under contract as a data processor. As a data processor, the organisation only processes data under instruction from NHS England.

The NHS Data Store data list is found at the following link:

<https://data.england.nhs.uk/covid-19/>.

Data is Processed on the Foundry Platform which is hosted in the UK Region of Amazon Web Services.

**Damian Collins:** [48390]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what rights the Government has granted to Palantir through its contract with the NHS to (a) access the NHS's application programming interface (API), (b) access and use systems, programmes or software made available through that API, and (c) use, copy, cache, store and make backup and archival copies of tools and documentation related to that API.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

NHS England has not made any application programming interfaces available to Palantir.

#### ■ **Protective Clothing: Procurement**

**Helen Hayes:** [48564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that due diligence is undertaken on personal protective equipment public procurement contracts with companies based outside the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government has set up a personal protective equipment (PPE) sourcing unit to secure new supply lines from across the world and has published rigorous standards for procurement. Expert procurement professionals from the National Health Service supply chain have been seconded into this dedicated new unit to work with the

Government Commercial function. This unit is identifying PPE suppliers from across the globe to meet the increasing demand for a growing list of PPE products.

## ■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

[49889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the equity of social care fees passed onto relatives when a loved one has passed away.

**Helen Whately:**

This information is not collected centrally and so no assessment has been made.

If any debt is incurred when paying for care, we expect the local authority to follow the principles set out in the relevant guidance; that they should act reasonably; and that any arrangements for debt repayments are agreed between the relevant parties.

## ■ Vitamin D: Coronavirus

**Mr David Jones:**

[48305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the efficacy of Vitamin D in the (a) treatment and (b) prevention of covid-19.

**Jo Churchill:**

Public Health England (PHE) is monitoring any new, high quality evidence on nutrition and COVID-19 and seeking the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) as appropriate. PHE is carrying out a rapid review of recent evidence relating to vitamin D and the prevention of acute respiratory tract infections for SACN to consider at its meeting in June 2020.

PHE is aware of reviews and trials underway further exploring the vitamin D and the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Examples of clinical trials underway on vitamin D and COVID-19 can be found at the following link:

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=COVID&term=vitamin+d&cntry=&state=&city=&dist>

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Asylum: Finance

**Marion Fellows:**

[48509]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to extend its contract for ASPEN cards.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office's contract to provide financial support to asylum seekers through an Aspen Card has been extended until 27 February 2021.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[49636]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons asylum support rates are lower in 2020 than they were in 2002; and if she will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free accommodation (with utility bills and council tax paid) and a weekly cash allowance to meet their other essential living needs (the legal test).

The current level of the allowance is £37.75 per week for each person in the asylum seeker's household and is assessed using a methodology adopted in 2014. The methodology has been recognised by the Court of Appeal as rational and lawful. Details of how it works are set out in the reports published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-review-of-cash-allowance-paid-to-asylum-seekers>

The allowances provided in 2002 were generally linked to mainstream benefits provided by the Department of Work and Pensions. The amount provided depended on a variety of factors, including the age of the asylum seeker. Those asylum seekers aged over 25 received a higher rate (£37.77) than those aged between 18-24 (£29.88). From 2009, however, all new asylum seekers were placed on the lower rate previously only applicable to those aged under 25.

The current asylum support allowances are not linked in any way to mainstream benefit levels.

**Alex Norris:**

[49810]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the asylum support rate of £37.75 per week during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

We are currently reviewing the level of the cash allowances, as we do each year, to ensure that they remain capable of meeting the essential living needs of asylum seekers

## ■ Aviation

**Stephen Doughty:**

[48464]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) flights of private non-scheduled aircraft and (b) individuals, including crew members, landed at UK airfields from 1 January 2020 to 18 May 2020; how many and what proportion of those flights were categorised as (i) private / general aviation, (ii) cargo, (iii) military and (iv) other; and what the five most common points of departure were for those flights.

**James Brokenshire:**

I have been asked by the Department for Transport to respond to this question

Monitoring of flight traffic conducted by Eurocontrol shows that between 01 January 2020 and 30 April 2020 there were 14,225 aircraft arrivals at UK airports. An estimated categorisation of these aircraft arrivals based on Eurocontrol's identification rules are provided in the table below. This data source does not provide information about the aircrafts' point of departure or information about passengers or crew on board.

| AIRCRAFT CATEGORY   | ESTIMATED PROPORTION |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Tradition Scheduled | 27%                  |
| Low Cost            | 16%                  |
| Charter             | 9%                   |
| Business Aviation   | 25%                  |
| All-Cargo           | 10%                  |
| Military            | 3%                   |
| Other               | 9%                   |

Information on passenger numbers are officially collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and received from applicable UK airports in adherence to statistical regulation (EC) 437/2003 on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of passengers, freight and mail by air. However, this data collection relates to commercial aircraft movements only.

## ■ Biometric Residence Permits

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[48510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to extend its contract with Post Office Ltd for biometric residence permit collections.

**Kevin Foster:**

On 11 March 2020 it was decided to extend the existing contract for the collection of Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) from the Post Office Ltd until the end of February 2021.

We are conducting a review of the current contract which is likely to be completed by end of August 2020. A decision will then be taken to further extend the existing Post Office contract or to tender for a new solution.

## ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Crispin Blunt:**

[\[R\] \[48249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraphs 4 and 5 on page 3 of her Department's Factsheet on Cannabis, CBD and other

cannabinoids, what assessment she has made of the limit of detection that is the appropriate level of sensitivity to accurately determine through laboratory analysis that there are no controlled cannabinoids present in a CBD product and that the product contains CBD in its pure form.

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[48250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to limb A of the definition of an exempted product on page five of her Department's Drug Licensing Factsheet - Cannabis, CBD and other cannabinoids, what her Department's definition is of the term administration.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Department has made no assessment of limits of detection in relation to testing for the presence of controlled cannabinoids in CBD products. The Home Office approach is one of caution, that is, that a CBD product is likely to be controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 ('the 2001 Regulations') if it contains any controlled cannabinoids.

The term 'administration' in the exempt product definition is not defined by the 2001 Regulations. The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 provides the following as part of its definition:

““administer” means administer to a human being—

(a) orally, by injection, or by introduction into the body in any other way; or

(b) by external application (whether or not by direct application to the body)”

The interpretation of legislation is ultimately a matter for the courts to decide.

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Males

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[48301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle domestic abuse against men.

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[48302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police on domestic violence against men.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime and the Government is committed to doing everything we can to tackle it. Domestic abuse affects men as well as women and last year we published a dedicated male victims position statement to recognise the needs of male victims and to clarify and strengthen our response.

The Home Office funds the Men's Advice Line which provides support and advice to male victims of domestic abuse. This helpline received additional funding from the £2m announced by the Home Secretary on April 11 to bolster domestic abuse helplines during COVID-19. On 19 May the Home Office announced £2m of funding



to charities with a national or regional presence which will provide further support for male and female victims of domestic abuse.

We have also provided £500,000 to improve support to male victims of domestic abuse and provided funding to Galop which provides advice and support to LGBT+ populations affected by domestic abuse, including for the National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline. This helpline also received additional funding from the £2m announced by the Home Secretary.

The Government domestic abuse awareness raising campaign under the hashtag #YouAreNotAlone, signposts victims to sources of advice and support. Details of these services can be found at [www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse](http://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

The Home Office regularly engages with police forces on a wide range of domestic abuse issues.

#### ■ Home Office: Overseas Aid

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[49891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department first appointed a Director of Official Development Assistance, and what the (a) salary and (b) job description is for that position.

**Chris Philp:**

Currently the Home Office does not have a dedicated Director of Official Development Assistance (ODA). The ODA work falls under the remit of the International Directorate, and the International Director.

A new role of Director of Official Development Assistance has been created, and the vacancy is live on the Civil Service jobs website. The closing deadline for this application is 17<sup>th</sup> June.

The role is to build and lead a new ODA Directorate for the Home Office and enact transformative change to focus the Department's activities on strategic upstream interventions.

#### ■ Home Office: Written Questions

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[48462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer Questions 41463 and 41464 tabled by the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth.

**Chris Philp:**

The responses to UIN 41463 was answered on 26th May 2020 and UIN 41464 was answered 28th May 2020.

## ■ Human Trafficking: Children

**Karen Bradley:**

[R] [\[48983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the National Referral Mechanism for protecting children that are victims of (a) human trafficking and (b) modern slavery.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Modern slavery is an umbrella term which includes trafficking, slavery and forced or compulsory labour.

The Government is committed to providing all child victims of modern slavery the support they need by ensuring the effectiveness of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). While referrals are made to the NRM – our system for identifying, supporting and protecting victims, the support they need is provided by Local Authorities under their safeguarding responsibilities.

The safety and welfare of all child victims, irrespective of whether they have experienced slavery and/ or trafficking, are addressed as the priority. Local authorities are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area. If a child in the NRM becomes looked after, they will be entitled to the same level of support and care as all looked after children regardless of their nationality or immigration status. Local children's services will work in close co-operation with the police and other statutory agencies to offer potential child victims of modern slavery the protection and support they require.

In addition to this statutory support, the Government has expanded Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs) to one third of local authorities in England and Wales. ICTGs are an additional source of advice and support for all potential child victims of modern slavery, irrespective of nationality, and somebody who can advocate on their behalf.

In October 2017, the Government announced an ambitious package of reforms to the NRM. These reforms enable the NRM to deliver quicker and more certain decision-making that stakeholders and victims have confidence in; improved support for adult victims before, during and after the NRM; improved identification of victims; and improved support to child victims of modern slavery. More information on the NRM reform is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-referral-mechanism-reform/national-referral-mechanism-reform>

## ■ Human Trafficking: Victims

**Alex Norris:**

[\[48585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism were made by telephone in (a) 2018 and (b) 2019.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Designated First Responders can make referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) via the online referral form at <https://www.modernslavery.gov.uk/start>. This became available to all designated First Responders on 29 August 2019. Prior to this, referrals were made via email.

The Single Competent Authority does not accept NRM referrals made by telephone. The Home Office did not receive NRM referrals by telephone in 2018 or 2019.

**■ Immigrants****Stephen Doughty:****[48465]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people including crew members arrived at the UK border via (a) general aviation, (b) military airfields and (c) non-control point maritime ports of entry in each week from 1 January 2020 to 18 May 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not routinely collect number of Passengers and crew members arriving at the UK Border at this level of detail.

The Immigration Statistics publication on the 21 May included data on total passenger arrivals, up to the end of March 2020. In addition, on 28 May, the Home Office published an ad hoc statistical release 'Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020', which provided further information on the number of arrivals to the UK up to the end of April 2020.

**■ Immigrants: Health Services****Stephen Timms:****[49574]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people paid the Immigration Health Surcharge in the most recent year for which data is available.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does not routinely publish volume data relating to Immigration Health Surcharge payers. Income data for the Immigration Health Surcharge is published annually in the Home Office Annual Report and Accounts.

Please see page 137 of the Home Office 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts for the most recent disclosure of Immigration Health Surcharge income  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads>

**■ Immigration****Stephen Timms:****[49575]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were given leave to remain in the UK subject to the no recourse to public funds condition in 2019.

**Kevin Foster:**

The information you have requested is not assured to the standard required by ONS for publication and as it would be too costly to do so, we are unable to provide it.

■ **Members: Correspondence****Afzal Khan:**[\[49112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer the letter to her dated 7 April 2020 from the hon Member for Manchester, Gorton regarding Ms D McDowell.

**Chris Philp:**

A reply was sent by the Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts on 20 May 2020.

■ **Migrant Workers: NHS****Sir Roger Gale:**[\[49570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what was the annual value of the health service charges that her Department collects from immigrants working the the NHS and social care services in each of the last two years for which figures are available.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office does not collate or publish the information requested.

Income generated by Immigration Health Surcharge payments go directly to NHS services, helping to protect and sustain our world-class healthcare system for everyone who uses it.

■ **Passengers****Lisa Nandy:**[\[48975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of the 18 May 2020 to Question 46045, if she will ensure that statistics on how many passenger arrivals to the UK there were by (a) air, (b) sea and (c) rail on each day between 1 January and 11 May 2020 are included in the (i) next quarterly Immigration Statistics due for publication on 21 May and (ii) statistical release titled Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020, due for publication on 28 May.

**Chris Philp:**

The Immigration Statistics publication on the 21 May included data on total passenger arrivals, up to the end of March 2020. In addition, on 28 May, the Home Office published an ad hoc statistical release 'Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020', which provided further information on the number of arrivals to the UK up to the end of April 2020.

## ■ Police: Protective Clothing

**Chi Onwurah:**

[48421]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to police forces on (a) how to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), (b) when to wear PPE and (c) what kind of PPE to wear.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The UK Government has published guidance on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for emergency workers, including the police. The National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing have issued operational guidance to all forces on the use of PPE tailored to their unique role to ensure officers and staff are protected sufficiently. The guidance covers how, when and what type of PPE to wear across a range of practical scenarios.

An explanatory note of the guidance is available here:

<https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/Documents/Personal-Protective-Equipment-Operational-Guidance-1.pdf>

## ■ Royal Family: Security

**Conor McGinn:**

[48521]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been covered by the VIP and Royal protection scheme; and what the cost of that scheme has been to public purse in each year since 2010.

**James Brokenshire:**

It is our long-standing policy not to provide detailed information on the security arrangements for protected individuals. To do so could compromise the integrity of those arrangements and affect the security of the individuals concerned.

## ■ Slavery

**Karen Bradley:**

[R] [48984]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has been made on developing a registry of modern slavery statements.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government has committed to develop a new gov.uk registry for organisations in scope of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act to publish their modern slavery statements. As well as enabling the Government to monitor compliance with the legislation, the registry will increase transparency - by making it easier for the consumers, NGOs and investors to find and scrutinise modern slavery statements.

The Discovery and Alpha phases of the digital project have now been completed. These stages involved user research with business, public bodies, NGOs and investors to inform the design of the service. The project is now progressing to the Beta phase of work, which will involve further research with users as we build and launch the service.

## ■ Social Distancing: Enforcement

**Peter Kyle:** [48559]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance has been issued to police on the criteria that frontline officers may use to determine if a person is sufficiently alert for the purposes of Government covid-19 guidelines.

**Chris Philp:**

We are working closely with policing partners to make sure there is clear guidance for officers on what the new measures entail. This guidance is available at <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/understanding-the-law/Pages/default.aspx>

We expect people to do the right thing and follow the guidance that will help to keep us all safe. And the Gov.uk guidance is clear in its instruction to the general public: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

## ■ UK Border Force: Coronavirus

**Stephen Doughty:** [49010]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times UK Border Force officials have requested assistance from Public Health England officials to deal with suspected cases of covid-19 at each UK Port of Entry in each of the last five months.

**Chris Philp:**

Border Force does not hold the detailed data requested.

## ■ Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre

**Jess Phillips:** [49711]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to question 34992, on Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre: Coronavirus, how many new detainees that centre has accepted since the start of covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

The safety and health of people in the detention estate are of the utmost importance. We are following all Public Health England guidance and have robust contingency plans in place.

The Home Office publishes data on people in immigration detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of entries into immigration detention by place of initial detention are published in table DET\_D01 of the immigration detention detailed datasets. Figures covering the first quarter of 2020 were released on 21st May 2020. In this dataset, figures for Yarl's Wood include the individuals entering the Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre, and clandestine arrivals entering the adjacent Midlands Intake Unit (a short-term holding facility) who are processed before being dispersed through appropriate routes. Those being held

for processing spend very short periods of time at the Yarl's Wood short-term holding facility and may only be held for a maximum of seven days.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

There are currently no cases of COVID-19 in IRCs

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### ■ Parliament: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

[49763]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, when it plans to publish the risk assessment on the safety of Parliament opening on 2 June 2020.

**Pete Wishart:**

The risk assessment was published on 28th May and can be accessed from the [UK Parliament transparency pages](#).

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Charities: Finance

**Rosie Cooper:**

[48337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will ensure that local authorities are provided with sufficient funding to provide grants to all charities in receipt of charitable rate relief.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

In response to Covid-19, the government announced there would be support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, delivered through the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund (RLHGF).

In addition to this, on 1 May, the government announced that up to £617 million is being made available to local authorities in England to allow them to provide discretionary grants. This additional fund is aimed at small businesses who were not eligible for the SBGF or the RLHGF; small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs but not liable for business rates or rates reliefs.

We are asking local authorities to prioritise the following types of businesses for grants from within this funding pot:

- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief;
- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible work spaces;

- Regular market traders; and
- Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates.

Local authorities are responsible for defining precise eligibility for this fund and may choose to make payments to other businesses based on local economic need, subject to those businesses meeting the specific eligibility criteria.

Guidance, intended to support local authorities in administering the Discretionary Grants Fund, was published 13 May. This will not replace existing guidance for the SBGF or the RHLGF. Guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding>.

### ■ Cladding: Fire Prevention

**Mike Amesbury:**

[48602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on providing interim support to cover Waking Watch schemes in buildings with dangerous cladding.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Interim measures such as waking watch should only ever be short term and are not a substitute for remediation. Lord Greenhalgh, the Minister with responsibility for building safety, is investigating what can be done to reduce the cost of waking watch, and to ensure that waking watches, where they are required, can continue during the current Covid-19 restrictions.

We continue to take action to support remediation, including significant funding of £1 billion for non-ACM cladding remediation, on top of the existing £600 million for ACM remediation, so that work to make buildings safe can continue as quickly as possible.

### ■ Coronavirus: Local Government Finance

**Karin Smyth:**

[48520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the long-term financial effects on local authorities in (a) the South West and (b) other areas of the England with low rates of covid-19 deaths of a potentially delayed peak in covid-19 cases in those areas compared to other areas of England.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government has now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities through an un-ringfenced grant so they can address pressures they are facing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Local authorities in the South West of England have received £316 million of this funding.

The package 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 councils have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

We will continue to work with local government and their representatives to ensure they are managing the pandemic.

## ■ Council Tax Benefits

**Jon Cruddas:**

**[49603]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 12853, on Council Tax Benefits, if he will provide details of the steps his Department has taken to tackle the findings in the Institute of Fiscal Studies research, published in January 2019, on the effect of the abolition of council tax benefit on low-income households.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government considers views from a wide range of organisations, including the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and takes account of them as part of its ongoing management of council tax policy. Local authorities are responsible for the design of schemes that provide council tax support to low-income households in their area.

## ■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes: Greater London

**Jon Cruddas:**

**[49602]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 12851, on Council Tax Reduction Schemes, how much income was forgone as a result of providing council tax support for working age and pensioner households in each London borough in 2019-20.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Council tax expected to be forgone in 2019-20 as a result of providing council tax support for working age and pensioner households was published as part of the Council Taxbase 2019 statistical release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2019-in-england>. The amount of council tax expected to be forgone is included in the CT Support section of the local authority level dropdown.

## ■ Evictions

**Richard Burgon:**

**[49773]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many eviction notices have been issued in each week since March 1 2020.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government does not collect information on the number of notices landlords issue to tenants indicating a desire to regain possession of their property.

Where a landlord serves a valid notice on Assured Shorthold Tenancy, the landlord can only lawfully regain possession by using the county court process unless the tenant chooses to vacate the property.

The Mortgage and Landlord Repossession Statistics record the number of claims for possession brought by landlords in the county court. The latest statistics (Figure 9) show the number of claims for possession issued on a weekly basis from the week commencing 3 February until the week commencing 23 March. The statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mortgage-and-landlord-possession-statistics-january-to-march-2020>.

The Government, along with the courts service, has delivered unprecedented support to protect tenants from eviction during the Coronavirus emergency. Emergency legislation is now in place so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict their tenants for at least a three-month period. The Master of the Rolls, with the agreement of the Lord Chancellor, also suspended all ongoing and new housing possession cases for 90 days from 27 March 2020. As a result of these measures, no tenant in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction during this time.

#### ■ High Rise Flats: Insurance

**Mike Amesbury:**

**[48603]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made in discussions with the insurance industry to reduce escalating premiums for leaseholders in tower blocks.

**Christopher Pincher:**

On 13 May, the Minister for Building Safety held a roundtable with representatives of the insurance industry to address some of the challenges impacting residents of high rise residential buildings. A number of options were discussed, and the Department will continue to engage with the insurance industry to explore these possibilities further.

#### ■ Local Council Tax Support Schemes Independent Review

**Jon Cruddas:**

**[49604]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 February 2020 to Question 12854, on Local Council Tax Support Schemes Independent Review, if he will provide details of the external organisations his Department has engaged with in the implementing the recommendations in Eric Ollerenshaw's Independent Review of Local Council Tax Support Schemes.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Department regularly meets with a wide range of stakeholders – including representatives from local authorities, the Local Government Association, debt advice bodies, and other Government Departments – to discuss council tax policy, including local council tax support

Details of Ministers' and Permanent Secretary meetings with external organisations can be found at the following links on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dclg-ministerial-data>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-expenses-and-hospitality-for-dclg-senior-officials>

The Department does not maintain a record of all meetings which take place between officials and external organisations.

## ■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

**Karin Smyth:**

[48516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the estimate by the Local Government Association that the cost to local authorities of tackling the covid-19 outbreak is £13 billion; and whether he has plans to allocate additional funding from the public purse to local authorities to meet that cost.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

MHCLG continues to work closely with local authorities to manage the impacts of Covid-19 on our society.

The Government has made £3.2 billion available to local authorities in England through unringfenced grant so they can address pressures they are facing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have also announced measures worth over £5 billion to ease immediate cashflow concerns. These measures recognise the additional costs and financial pressures councils are facing as a result of the current crisis. They demonstrate the Government's commitment to making sure all councils have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

These measures are part of a comprehensive package of support for local areas from across Government, including £13 billion to support small businesses, £10.2 billion in business rates support for businesses, £600 million for infection control in care homes and £500 million of council tax support for vulnerable families.

Estimates of full-year costs are necessarily unreliable at this stage since the progress of the pandemic is unknown. We will continue to work with councils over the coming weeks, including through new monthly financial monitoring, to ensure we have a collective understanding of the issues they are facing.

**Mark Pritchard:**

[49624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund is (a) subject to Freedom of Information requests or (b) protected under the GDPR.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

All recorded information held by MHCLG as a public authority is eligible for disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In some instances a FOI request may be

refused if the information requested falls under one of Act's exemptions, including that for personal data

Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of grants to businesses, and therefore details of individual grant awards would need to be directed to local authorities. Under guidance for the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund, local authorities are required to set out the scope of their discretionary grant scheme on their website, providing clear guidance on which types of business are being prioritised.

## ■ Planning Permission: Coronavirus

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[49592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure public consultation on local planning decisions during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has made clear that local planning authorities should continue to prioritise decision-making during these challenging times to ensure that the planning system continues to function, especially when this will support the local economy

Local planning authorities are still required to undertake a formal period of public consultation of no less than 21 days, prior to deciding a planning application.

Effective consultation allows local planning authorities to identify and consider all relevant planning issues associated with a proposed development. Where relevant considerations are raised by local residents, these must be taken into account by the local authority. Local planning authorities can choose to extend the consultation period if they consider it necessary

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings and Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 has introduced temporary regulations to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications, listed building consent applications and environmental statements for EIA development in response to the coronavirus.

Local planning authorities (and applicants of EIA development under the Town and Country Planning Act) now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirements for site notices, neighbour notifications or newspaper publicity. These steps will notify people who are likely to have an interest in the application and indicate where further information about it can be viewed online. These steps can include the use of social media and other electronic communications, such as local online news portals, and must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.

The Government has also introduced legislation to allow council committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period. The Planning Advisory Service has

produced guidance for local planning authorities on how to adapt their planning services in response to covid-19, including information on planning committees.

These measures will ensure sufficient public participation in the planning process is maintained.

## ■ Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[48254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for the re-opening of places of worship as covid-19 lockdown measures are eased; and if he will make a statement.

**Luke Hall:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer of 20 May to Question UIN 47171.

## ■ Religious Freedom: Employment

**Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:**

[\[49887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Resolution 2318 (2020) on the protection of freedom of religion or belief in the workplace.

**Luke Hall:**

Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right, and one which underpins many of the others. Britain has a proud tradition of religious tolerance, within the law. The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief and promoting respect between communities of different religions and those of no religion. Promoting the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief is one of the UK's human rights policy priorities. In the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and other multilateral fora, the UK works with like-minded partners on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The Government is committed to ensuring that people are protected against discrimination because of religion or belief, and that they are able to exercise the right to hold and manifest their beliefs in a reasonable manner.

Resolution 2318 concerns the protection of freedom of religion or belief in the workplace. Domestic anti-discrimination provisions covering religion or belief are contained in the Equality Act 2010. Anyone who feels that they have suffered discrimination because of religion or belief can contact either The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), for issues related to the workplace, or the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) for non-employment matters. Both services provide free advice to members of the public.

ACAS and the EASS refer appropriate cases to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which is the country's national equality and enforcement body. Both the EHRC and ACAS have published guidance for employers and employees about religion or belief and the workplace.

The UK Government thanks the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for its recent debate, report, and Resolution 2318 (2020) on the protection of freedom of religion or belief in the workplace. Working with partners and key stakeholders, the UK Government will continue to consider actively, and across departments, the important topics raised by Resolution 2318 (2020).

## ■ Rents: Arrears

**Richard Burgon:**

[\[49774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of value of rent arrears outstanding in (a) Leeds, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) the UK as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department does not routinely collect information on the value of rent arrears.

Emergency legislation is now in place so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict their tenants for at least a three-month period. The courts have also suspended housing possession proceedings. As a result of these measures, no tenant in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction during this time.

In addition, the Government has introduced an unprecedented financial support package to help renters continue to pay their living costs, including rent. This includes support for businesses to pay staff salaries, strengthening the welfare safety-net with a £7 billion boost to Universal Credit, and increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents in each area.

For renters who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments are also available. As announced at the spending round for 2020/21, there is already £180 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for local authorities to distribute for supporting renters with housing costs in the private and social rented sectors.

## ■ Repossession Orders: Coronavirus

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[48439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether two months' rent arrears will be grounds for mandatory possession as stated in Ground 8 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988 after the ban on evictions due to the covid-19 outbreak is lifted; and what steps his Department is taking to support renters accumulating arrears once the ban on evictions is lifted after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Emergency legislation is now in place so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict their tenants for at least a three-month period. The courts have also suspended housing possession proceedings. As a result of these measures, no tenant in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction during this time.

We have also been clear in guidance that there is a need for landlords to offer support and understanding to tenants – and any guarantor – who may see their income fluctuate. This could include reaching a temporary agreement not to seek possession action for a period of time and instead, pause payments or accept a lower level of rent, or agree a plan to pay off arrears at a later date.

The Government has also put in place significant financial support measures to help renters continue to pay their living costs, including rent. This includes support for businesses to pay staff salaries, strengthening the welfare safety-net with a £7 billion boost to Universal Credit, and increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents in each area.

Any decision to alter these emergency measures will be informed by Public Health guidance, alongside consideration of the needs of landlords and tenants.

### ■ **Uk Shared Prosperity Fund**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49042]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that an assessment of (a) economic equality across all regions and constituent parts of the UK, (b) environmental impacts, (c) equality and diversity factors and (d) effects on people's well-being is made when evaluating Shared Prosperity Fund applications.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which tackles inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations. This builds upon previous commitments to create a fund which tackles inequalities between communities by raising productivity, especially in those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind. As is usual Government policy, the fund will be designed and delivered in a way that ensures it complies with the public sector equality duty and environmental impact assessments. Final decisions on the UKSPF will be made after a cross-Government Spending Review.

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[49043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what role the Government plans that voluntary and community organisations will play in accessing funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund which binds together the whole of the United Kingdom, tackling inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations. Stakeholder views from across the UK, including representatives from the voluntary and charity sector, have helped inform progress on policy design. Final decisions on the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will need to be taken after a cross-Government Spending Review.



**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**■ **Bangladesh: Rohingya****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[49028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of effect of the Bangladeshi Government's internet restrictions in Rohingya refugee camps on the ability of human rights organisations to respond to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

Good communications are critical for all aspects of the COVID-19 preparedness and response in the camps. Human rights organisations are working to provide legal guidance, monitor and advocate for the safety and wellbeing of refugees in line with international standards, and support the efforts of the protection sector overall, particularly to respond to violence against women and girls.

The internet and access restrictions limit the ability of agencies to share information with the refugees and with each other; and of the Rohingya to communicate among themselves. However, despite the decreased presence of humanitarian personnel in the camps, and internet and sim card restrictions, Rohingya are still able to communicate on a limited scale with human rights organisations. Protection services are among the critical services continuing in the camps and information sharing structures between organisations are functional. We continue to emphasise the importance of telecommunication access in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps in our senior meetings with the Government of Bangladesh. We have requested the lifting of restrictions and allowing full communication access in the camps.

■ **CDC: Burma****Stephen Doughty:**[\[49008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the total invested by the Commonwealth Development Corporation in (a) Shan Orchard, (b) Frontiir Co. Ltd, (c) Solar Home Pte Ltd, (d) MC Easy Microfinance Co. Ltd, (e) Alliance for Microfinance in Myanmar Ltd, (f) Advans Myanmar and (g) Irrawaddy Green Tower Project in Myanmar was in each of the last five years.

**James Duddridge:**

As stated in Written Question 46671, CDC has invested a total of \$78,795,576 into the above companies over the last five years (2015-19). A \$50,000,000 direct debt investment was made in Irrawaddy Green Tower Project in 2016. A \$20,000,000 direct equity investment was made in Frontiir Co. Ltd in 2019. The remainder has been invested through 4 investment funds. These are Anthem Asia Myanmar SME Venture Fund, Insitor Impact Asia Fund Private Ltd, Myanmar Opportunities Fund II and Advans S.A. These funds have made six investments over the last five years in Shan Orchard, Solar Home Pte Ltd, MC Easy Microfinance Co. Ltd, Alliance for Microfinance in Myanmar Ltd, Advans Myanmar and Frontiir Co Ltd.



CDC discloses on its website the amount it invests into companies, projects and investment funds. The amount invested by those funds into underlying investments is not disclosed as this information is commercially sensitive

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[49009]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will publish the (a) Environmental and Social Due Diligence and (b) assessment against the Commonwealth Development Corporation Code of Responsible Investing for the investments in companies (a) Shan Orchard, (b) Frontiir Co. Ltd, (c) Solar Home Pte Ltd, (d) MC Easy Microfinance Co. Ltd, (e) Alliance for Microfinance in Myanmar Ltd, (f) Advans Myanmar and (g) Irrawaddy Green Tower Project in Myanmar.

**James Duddridge:**

CDC's rigorous due diligence process involves assessing a wide range of Environmental and Social, as well as Business Integrity risks and involves the production of multiple separate documents and reports. Ordinarily, CDC does not publish the suite of documents related to the due diligence it undertakes in the course of making investments because these documents contain commercially confidential or sensitive information about the business being reviewed.

On that basis, DFID does not intend to publish the documents related to the due diligence of investments listed above.

CDC does publish an overview of expected development impact, including key elements related to Environmental and Social issues, for new investments into companies and funds. The next update of CDC's database will be available from July when CDC publishes its Annual Review.

**Stephen Doughty:**

**[49886]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the business activities are of (a) Shan Orchard, (b) Frontiir Co. Ltd, (c) Solar Home Pte Ltd, (d) MC Easy Microfinance Co. Ltd, (e) Alliance for Microfinance in Myanmar Ltd, (f) Advans Myanmar and (g) Irrawaddy Green Tower Project as invested in by CDC Group; and whether (i) the Government of Myanmar and (ii) local state authorities have shareholdings in each business.

**James Duddridge:**

The business activities of these investments are:

| BUSINESS NAME      | BUSINESS ACTIVITIES                                     |
|--------------------|---|
| Shan Orchard       | An agri-business focussed on the production of avocados |
| Frontiir Co. Ltd   | An internet service provider                            |
| Solar Home Pte Ltd | A provider of pay-as-you-go solar home systems.         |

| BUSINESS NAME                            | BUSINESS ACTIVITIES                                     |
|--|---|
| MC Easy Microfinance Co. Ltd             | A microfinance institution                              |
| Alliance for Microfinance in Myanmar Ltd | A microfinance institution                              |
| Advans Myanmar                           | A microfinance institution                              |
| Irrawaddy Green Tower                    | An infrastructure provider of telecommunications towers |

Neither the Government of Myanmar or local state authorities are on the shareholder lists of any of the above businesses.

### ■ Commonwealth Veterans' Programme

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[49805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many (a) veterans, (b) widows of veterans and (c) households have been supported through the Commonwealth Veterans Programme in each of the last two financial years.

**Wendy Morton:**

The first disbursements to recipients of this programme began in April 2019. In the financial year 2019/2020, 2,490 veterans and 3,229 widows of veterans were supported through the Commonwealth Veterans Programme. Disbursements are currently underway for this financial year (April 2020 to March 2021). To date, 1,815 veterans and 1,960 widows of veterans have received support. We do not track the number of households benefitting from this programme, because support is made on an individual basis.

### ■ Department for International Development: Correspondence

**Marion Fellows:** [\[49738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the average length of time was for Ministers of her Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Nigel Adams:**

In line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Department for International Development has a target of responding within 15 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, we are currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. We ensure that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised and are taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

## ■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[49097]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43725, if she will publish the Government policies to ensure pharmaceutical companies in receipt of public funds allow equitable access to covid-19 vaccines and medical tools for people living in the Global South.

**Wendy Morton:**

DFID supports international organisations and partnerships to develop new medical technologies for diseases affecting people in low-income countries, including COVID-19. These organisations and partnerships are committed to developing products that meet developing country needs and are affordable and accessible. They adopt a range of policies and partnership approaches to achieve this, which are relevant to contexts, stakeholders and challenges particular to different disease areas and product types.

We encourage dialogue across industry, international organisations and governments on how best to facilitate access to medicines, including through the use of TRIPS-compliant licensing models in developing countries. We encourage the use of non-exclusive voluntary licensing, the transfer of technology to developing countries and business model innovation.

The Government is committed to supporting access to COVID-19 medical technologies for developing countries, and we are working closely with international partners, including through the ACT-accelerator, to support this ambition. We have committed £250 million of UK aid to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, £40 million to the Wellcome Therapeutics Accelerator and up to £23 million to the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, to support equitable access to COVID-19 medical technologies.

Furthermore, we are ensuring that publicly funded work to find a vaccine in the UK supports global efforts. If the Oxford University trials are successful, AstraZeneca have said they will work with global partners on distributing a vaccine internationally, making it available to developing countries.

**Matt Western:**

**[49100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to ensure that developing countries have access to covid-19 testing.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is at the forefront of global research focussed on the development of potential COVID-19 tests, vaccines and treatments, and is providing aid to organisations central to the global response. This includes DFID's £23 million investment in the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, a global non-profit organisation driving innovation in developing and delivering tests to combat major diseases affecting the world's poorest populations, including for COVID-19. The UK's £75 million investment in the World Health Organization is supporting the

organisation's key role in providing technical support to countries to establish COVID-19 testing strategies and capacity.

## ■ Education: Females

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[49804]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the Government's commitment to ensure that every girl in the world receives 12 years of quality education.

**Wendy Morton:**

Ensuring 12 years of quality education for all children, especially girls, remains a UK priority. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls has become increasingly clear, with the education of poor girls in particular being disproportionately affected.

The UK's response to the pandemic entails mitigating short term risks by focussing on safety, nutrition, wellbeing and learning whilst schools are closed; and supporting countries to protect and maintain education budgets and work towards reopen schools safely in the longer term.

DFID is adapting its bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. The Global Partnership for Education, to which the UK is the largest donor, is flexing over £200 million to support education sector stability in response to the pandemic. We have also announced further funding to support emergency education in fragile contexts.

## ■ Global Partnership for Education: Overseas Aid

**Kate Green:**

**[49674]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has provided additional funding to the Global Partnership for Education to sustain education systems in the global south during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are at an unprecedented moment when almost the entire school-going population is out of school, affecting more than 1.5 billion children, half of them girls. Girls' education is a top UK development priority and officials are assessing how multilateral and other investments can mitigate short-term risks while schools are closed and protect education systems and finance for the medium to long-term.

The UK is the largest donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). We have supported GPE to urgently repurpose resources to support distance learning and help countries prepare plans to re-open schools through a dedicated \$250 million COVID-19 accelerated funding window. Beyond this, the UK has not provided additional funds to GPE.

## ■ Nutrition: Finance

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[49095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to help ensure that there is no cliff edge in nutrition financing.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK remains committed to preventing and treating malnutrition as part of our commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children. Addressing poor nutrition is also important in the face of COVID-19. We will continue to invest beyond 2020 in programmes to address malnutrition and to work closely with the Government of Japan to ensure the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit is a success.

## ■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[49096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will publish her Department's guidance to country offices on re-prioritising projects and programmes as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Wendy Morton:**

Across the DFID country office network, we are adapting over one hundred existing health and humanitarian programmes, and close to two hundred existing social protection, economic, governance, conflict and other programmes, across 35 countries and regions relevant to the COVID-19 response. The flexing and adaptation of DFID programmes must consider numerous factors, ensuring that our strategy is tailored to the local context. There are no plans to publish internal guidance to country offices.

In addition, the UK has pledged £764 million to support efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible. We are taking decisive and co-ordinated action, guided by the WHO and based on science and evidence.

## ■ Public Health: Coronavirus

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[49027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department has taken to engage with faith-based actors in (a) communicating public health messages and (b) her Department's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nigel Adams:**

I recognise both the important place that religious belief has for many people around the world affected by COVID-19 and the role that faith-based actors are playing in the response, particularly in communicating public health messages. Faith-based actors are key policy and delivery partners for DFID. We are committed to working with and alongside faith-based actors to meet the challenges posed to both the UK and internationally by COVID-19.

DFID is taking forward a structured approach to engagement with UK and international civil society, including faith-based actors. This is incorporating strategic and technical discussions to help inform the sector's response to the pandemic. Specifically, Baroness Sugg has chaired two round table discussions with the Chief Executive Officers from key civil society organisations including faith-based organisations on 3 April and the 1 May to update the sector on DFID's COVID-19 response to date, engage with concerns across the sector, and explore how to mitigate the threats posed by COVID-19 to sector resilience. Lord Ahmad is also planning to host a round table with faith leaders and faith-based development organisations to discuss how we can work together more effectively.

DFID has pledged new funding for civil society organisations including faith-based organisations to support the response. This includes £20 million through the Rapid Response Facility which includes funding for Christian Aid; up to £30 million of new grants through the next round of the UK Aid Direct programme, and significant funding through the DFID Unilever COVID-19 Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition. Faith-based organisations can receive funding through multilateral organisations as downstream partners as part of the UK's response and through our country office network. We have been reviewing our programme portfolio in light of the COVID-19 response, enabling us to identify existing activities which can already support the response and others which can be adapted or scaled up, such as our support to health systems and humanitarian crises.

## ■ Veterans: Poverty

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[49806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the number of commonwealth veterans and their families who worked for UK armed forces before their countries gained independence who are now living in poverty.

**Wendy Morton:**

It is estimated that there are just over 11,600 older people from Commonwealth or former Commonwealth countries who served in the British Armed Forces prior to their countries gaining independence. Of this number, it is known that around 6,200 are living in absolute poverty.

Through the Commonwealth Veteran's Programme, DFID provides regular cash transfers to Commonwealth veterans and their widows and widowers in 29 countries to ensure they receive the equivalent of two healthy meals a day to prevent them from going hungry.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Department for International Trade: Correspondence****Marion Fellows:**[\[49737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the average length of time was for Ministers of his Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Greg Hands:**

In line with Cabinet Office guidance, the Department for International Trade has a target of responding within 15 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, the Department for International Trade is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. The Department ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised, and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

**■ Drugs: Trade Agreements****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[49851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to prevent a potential increase in drug purchasing costs for the NHS in future trade deals.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[49855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that the NHS remains in public ownership and free at the point of use in the event that new trade deals are agreed.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government has been clear that the NHS will remain free at the point of need.

When HM Government is negotiating trade agreements, we have been clear that the NHS will not be on the table. The price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table. The services the NHS provides will not be on the table. The NHS is not, and never will be, for sale to the private sector, whether overseas or at home.

This position was reaffirmed in our negotiating objectives for a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America, published on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

**■ NHS: Trade Agreements****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[49596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the the protection of the National Health Service from future trade deals.



**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government has been clear that the NHS will remain free at the point of need.

When HM Government is negotiating trade agreements, we have been clear that the NHS will not be on the table. The price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table. The services the NHS provides will not be on the table. The NHS is not, and never will be, for sale to the private sector, whether overseas or at home.

The Department for International Trade works closely with a number of Departments as part of the policy-making process, including the Department for Health and Social Care, to make sure that these rigorous protections are included. Our position was reaffirmed in our negotiating objectives for a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America, published on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

**■ Overseas Trade: Economic Situation****Hywel Williams:**[\[48291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which countries are deemed by her Department as operating under non-market economy conditions.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

In line with WTO rules, the United Kingdom's trade remedies framework allows the application of non-market economy treatment for countries:

- a) That are not members of the WTO;
- b) That are members of the WTO, but where the terms of their membership contain specific provisions regarding the determination of the normal value; or
- c) Where there is a complete or substantially complete monopoly of its trade, and where all or substantially all domestic prices are fixed by the government.

**■ Trade Agreements****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[49854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she will bring the Government's negotiating objectives before Parliament in advance of future trade discussions; and whether hon Members will have a meaningful vote on the objectives for those trade discussions.

**Greg Hands:**

The Government is committed to the principle of effective parliamentary scrutiny. We have provided extensive information to Parliament on our negotiations, including publishing our objectives prior to the start of talks and holding open briefings for MPs and Peers at the launch of US and Japan talks.

We will continue to keep Parliament updated on negotiations as they progress, including close engagement with the International Trade Committee and the Lords International Agreements Committee.



This approach strikes the right balance between respecting the UK constitution, ensuring that Government can negotiate in the best interests of the UK; and ensuring that Parliament has the information it needs to effectively scrutinise our trade policy.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Arbitration

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[49852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether it is the Government's policy to exclude investor-state dispute settlement courts from any new trade deals.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[49853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government plans to include the involvement of investor-state dispute settlement courts in future trade deals.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The precise details of any future Free Trade Agreement are a matter for formal negotiations, and we would not seek to pre-empt these discussions.

The United Kingdom has negotiated investment agreements with Investor-State Dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions with over 90 existing treaty partners and recognises the important role that investment protection standards can play in reassuring our investors abroad. For example, these provisions can ensure that the assets of British investors are not expropriated without compensation, and that they are not treated in a discriminatory or arbitrary manner.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Turkey

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[48936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2020 to Question 43823, when her Department plans to commence trade negotiations with Turkey; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government places a great deal of importance on protecting the strong trading relationship between the United Kingdom and Turkey.

The United Kingdom-Turkey Trade Working Group was established in January 2017 and is working to secure a bilateral trade agreement as soon as possible. The Group met most recently in Ankara in February, and productive conversations are continuing through this challenging time.

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[48937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2020 to Question 43823, which (a) non-governmental organisations, (b) trade unions and (c) businesses her Department plans to consult prior to commencing trade negotiations with Turkey.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

My Department continues to engage with a range of interested parties to understand their priorities and inform the United Kingdom's approach to trade with countries where trade arrangements may change once we have left the European Union, including Turkey.

Many have been clear in their message that HM Government's priority should be to secure continuity, as far as is possible, in our trading relationships by the end of the transition period. Doing so has been the central focus of the United Kingdom-Turkey Trade Working Group, through which productive bilateral discussions continue in this challenging time.

**■ UK Trade With EU****Hywel Williams:**[\[48290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on restricting future international trade deals to countries that operate a market economy.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government continues to engage regularly with all relevant counterparts as we carry out our ambitious programme of negotiating free trade deals, including negotiating our future relationship with the EU.

As we do so, we will continue to make decisions based on the United Kingdom's national interest.

**JUSTICE****■ Courts: Coronavirus****Philip Davies:**[\[49622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using recently closed courts such as Camberwell Green Magistrates Court to help increase capacity that will be needed in the future as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

The former Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court building was sold and ownership transferred to the purchaser on 24 April 2020.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service officials are considering whether any recently closed courts which are still owned by HMCTS are suitable for reopening to provide increased capacity.

**■ Debts: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:**[\[48411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to support debtors during the covid-19 outbreak by (a) providing a mechanism for people who have historically been charged VAT on High Court enforcement debt fees to reclaim that cost where the judgment creditor is VAT registered and (b) notifying all High Court Enforcement Officers to stop charging debtors VAT on top of those debts with immediate effect.

**Chris Philp:**

The Ministry of Justice is working to produce guidance to clarify the circumstances and manner in which VAT costs can and should be recovered from judgment debtors as an enforcement cost. We have shared the draft guidance with interested parties for comment and will publish final guidance in due course.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[48412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of people who (a) have fallen and (b) will fall into debt as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Chalk:**

The government is conducting on-going work to understand and model the extent of indebtedness as a result of Covid-19. This data is still under development.

People will be impacted by Covid-19 in different ways and to varying extents. A number of measures have been announced to support individuals and businesses through this difficult time.

**Alex Cunningham:**[\[48413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the additional cost to debtors of High Court Enforcement officers' continued application of VAT to judgment debts during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

The Ministry of Justice has not made an estimate of the additional cost to debtors of the application of VAT to High Court enforcement fees during the covid-19 outbreak.

Due to the impact of covid-19, visits by enforcement agents (bailiffs) to take control of goods at residential premises and on highways are currently suspended under the Taking Control of Goods and Certification of Enforcement Agents (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 25 April. This restriction is a public health measure and will remain in place while the social distancing restrictions that limit the reasons for which a person can leave the place in which they live are in force under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

## ■ Hate Crime

**Stella Creasy:** [\[49672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission will publish its consultation paper on hate crime; and whether the review has been delayed from its original time frame of 18 months.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Law Commission continues to make good progress on the Hate Crime Consultation Paper, although some delay is inevitable given the impact of Covid-19.

The Law Commissioners are considering when to publish consultations on a case-by-case basis, based on whether they will be able to undertake sufficiently open and transparent consultation during the current circumstances. That is an essential aspect of the way they work. It is particularly important in relation to the Hate Crime project.

The Commissioners are keeping the situation under review and they will announce their decision on publication as soon as they can.

## ■ Prisoners' Release

**Philip Davies:** [\[49621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2020 to Question 45068 on Prisoners: Home Detention Curfew, if he will breakdown the (a) violence against the person, (b) theft, (c) drug and (d) miscellaneous crimes against society offence groups into the number of each of the individual offences in that group for each year.

**Philip Davies:** [\[49623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offences were committed by offenders on home detention curfew after being released before the halfway point in their sentences in each of the last three years.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The information requested in your first question can be found in the table attached.

The information requested in your second question could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Release on HDC is subject to a risk assessment to ensure that there is a plan in place to manage offenders safely. It is only available for certain offenders who receive sentences of less than four years. If offenders breach their curfew, or any other conditions of their licence, they can be recalled to prison.

### **Attachments:**

1. Table 1 [PQ 49621\_final.xlsx]

## ■ Prisons: Coronavirus

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[49084]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2020 to Question 45346 on Prisons: Coronavirus, how many cases of covid-19 there have been in each prison in England and Wales as of 19 May 2020; and if her Department will publish that data on a weekly basis.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The data in the table below is correct as of Tuesday 26 May. It should be stressed that these figures reflect the total number of recorded positive cases of COVID-19 since our first confirmed cases in mid-March – not the number of live cases - and includes individuals that have recovered. The figures are also drawn from our updated data stream as of Tuesday 26 May, reflecting a more robust way of reporting COVID-19 staff cases. The overall declining trend in new cases continues. It is noteworthy that numbers reported will be affected by a number of variables, including the availability of testing locally which can result in differences between sites and regions and as self-reported (for staff) through HMPPS management lines for central collation.

The department is considering the content of its regular reporting schedule and how that could be expanded.

| ESTABLISHMENT | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Altcourse     | 24          | 14             | 38   |
| Ashfield      | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Askham Grange | 4           | 0              | 4  |
| Aylesbury     | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Bedford       | 6           | ~              | ~  |
| Belmarsh      | 11          | 7              | 18   |
| Berwyn        | 25          | 34             | 59   |
| Birmingham    | 21          | ~              | ~  |
| Brinsford     | 21          | 5              | 26   |
| Bristol       | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Brixton       | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Bronzefield   | 6           | ~              | ~  |

| ESTABLISHMENT    | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Buckley Hall     | ~           | ~              | 5  |
| Bullington       | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Bure             | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Cardiff          | 23          | 22             | 45   |
| Channings Wood   | 14          | 9              | 23   |
| Chelmsford       | 9           | 0              | 9  |
| Coldingley       | 5           | ~              | ~  |
| Cookham Wood     | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Dartmoor         | ~           | ~              | 4  |
| Deerbolt         | 8           | ~              | ~  |
| Doncaster        | 12          | 8              | 20   |
| Dovegate         | 8           | ~              | ~  |
| Downview         | 4           | 0              | 4  |
| Drake Hall       | 25          | 41             | 66   |
| Durham           | 39          | 4              | 43   |
| East Sutton Park | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Eastwood Park    | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Elmley           | 5           | 0              | 5  |
| Erlestoke        | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Exeter           | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Featherstone     | ~           | ~              | 5  |
| FelthamA*        | ~           | ~              | 4  |
| FelthamB*        | 6           | ~              | ~  |
| Ford             | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Forest Bank      | ~           | 5              | ~  |

| ESTABLISHMENT        | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Foston Hall          | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Frankland            | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Full Sutton          | 8           | 0              | 8  |
| Garth                | 7           | 0              | 7  |
| Gartree              | 25          | 9              | 34   |
| Grendon              | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Guys Marsh           | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Hatfield             | ~           | ~              | 5  |
| Haverigg             | ~           | 6              | ~  |
| Hewell               | 33          | 10             | 43   |
| High Down            | 14          | ~              | ~  |
| Highpoint            | 11          | ~              | ~  |
| Hindley              | 10          | ~              | ~  |
| Hollesley Bay        | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Holme House          | 17          | 8              | 25   |
| Hull                 | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Humber               | 41          | 10             | 51   |
| Huntercombe          | ~           | ~              | 5  |
| Isis                 | 4           | 6              | 10   |
| Isle of Wight        | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Kirkham              | 5           | ~              | ~  |
| Kirklevington Grange | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Lancaster Farms      | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Leeds                | 4           | ~              | ~  |
| Leicester            | 6           | 5              | 11   |



| ESTABLISHMENT         | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Lewes                 | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Leyhill               | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Lincoln               | ~           | 4              | ~  |
| Lindholme             | 10          | 0              | 10   |
| Littlehey             | 6           | 6              | 12   |
| Liverpool             | 20          | ~              | ~  |
| Long Lartin           | ~           | ~              | 5  |
| Low Newton            | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Lowdham Grange        | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Maidstone             | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Manchester            | 19          | 20             | 39   |
| Medway (Adult)        | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Moorland              | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| New Hall              | ~           | 5              | ~  |
| North Sea Camp        | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Northumberland        | 14          | ~              | ~  |
| Norwich               | 6           | 0              | 6  |
| Nottingham            | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Oakwood               | 17          | 8              | 25   |
| Onley                 | 15          | 7              | 22   |
| ParcA**               | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| ParcB**               | 4           | 7              | 11   |
| Pentonville           | 15          | 4              | 19   |
| PeterboroughFemale*** | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| PeterboroughMale***   | 16          | ~              | ~  |

| ESTABLISHMENT | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Portland      | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Prescoed      | 4           | ~              | ~  |
| Preston       | 22          | ~              | ~  |
| Ranby         | 7           | 5              | 12   |
| Risley        | 20          | 16             | 36   |
| Rochester     | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Rye Hill      | 6           | ~              | ~  |
| Send          | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Stafford      | 5           | 0              | 5  |
| Stanford Hill | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Stocken       | 4           | ~              | ~  |
| Stoke Heath   | ~           | 4              | ~  |
| Springhill    | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Styal         | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Sudbury       | ~           | ~              | 4  |
| Swaleside     | ~           | ~              | ~  |
| Swansea       | 10          | 12             | 22   |
| Swinfen Hall  | 5           | 6              | 11   |
| Thameside     | 4           | 10             | 14   |
| The Mount     | 9           | ~              | ~  |
| The Verne     | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Thorn Cross   | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Usk           | 13          | 15             | 28   |
| Wakefield     | ~           | ~              | 6  |
| Wandsworth    | ~           | 11             | ~  |

| ESTABLISHMENT            | STAFF CASES | PRISONER CASES | TOTAL NUMBER OF<br>CASES BY<br>ESTABLISHMENT |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| Warren Hill              | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Wayland                  | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Wealstun                 | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Werrington               | 0           | 0              | 0  |
| Wetherby                 | ~           | 0              | ~  |
| Whatton                  | 0           | ~              | ~  |
| Whitemoor                | 10          | 6              | 16   |
| Winchester               | 23          | ~              | ~  |
| Woodhill                 | 24          | 0              | 24   |
| Wormwood Scrubs          | 13          | 6              | 19   |
| Wymott                   | 14          | 15             | 29   |
| <b>TOTAL-Estate wide</b> | <b>882</b>  | <b>447</b>     | <b>1329</b>                                  |

The symbol ~ denotes suppressed values of 3 or fewer (and totals that would allow values of 3 or fewer to be calculated) to avoid the risk of identifying individuals.

**Tim Farron:** [\[49628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to protect (a) prison staff and (b) prisoners who are unable to socially distance.

**Tim Farron:** [\[49629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to protect the health and safety of prison staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Social distancing has been used in prisons since 24 March through the implementation of a restricted regime and is promoted through regular communications.

Situations where social distancing is not possible are controlled through safe operating procedures developed in line with public health advice. Safe operating procedures identify the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items required in each situation and the method of use. There is currently adequate stock and forward supply of all PPE items in accordance with public health advice.

Basic hygiene is also a key part of tackling the virus and hand-washing facilities are available to all prisoners and staff, and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and other cleaning materials.

These measures form part of our comprehensive approach to supporting the health and safety of our staff and prisoners in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, also encompassing our compartmentalisation strategy for prisoners to protect the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals as well as boost the resilience of staffing at the frontline and roll-out of further testing.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### ■ House of Commons: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[49764\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policy on the House returning on 2 June 2020 of regional variations in the risk of contracting covid-19.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

As I have made clear in my recent appearances in the House, it is my belief that the House of Commons cannot be as effective in carrying out its constitutional duties without its members here.

The government is examining the regional effects of its measures to tackle covid-19, and any further advice on easing the lockdown will be considered carefully against the five tests. However, the return of the House physically is in line with government and scientific advice that those who cannot work from home should now return to work.

I would like to commend the work of the House of Commons Commission, which is making every effort to ensure that the parliamentary estate will be Covid-19 secure, just like any other workplace. Parliament will be following strict social distancing rules; the chamber will be limited to a maximum number of participants and division lobbies will be replaced by a more appropriate alternative.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Exports: Northern Ireland

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[48539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to Article 6.1 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, what the international requirements and commitments are that are relevant to the prohibitions and restrictions on the exportation of goods from the Union required under international obligation of the Union.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

As set out in the 20 May 2020 Command paper on the implementation of the Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol, there are a number of specific international obligations binding on the UK and the EU, for example, obligations on the movement of endangered species which will apply to the movement of goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain.

We will ensure that the necessary procedures apply only to very minimal volumes of relevant trade necessary to comply with those obligations. For goods affected, the processes put in place in these very specific cases will have negligible implications for trade as a whole. We will provide guidance to the small number of traders affected before the end of the Transition Period.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Correspondence****Marion Fellows:**[\[49745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the average length of time was for Ministers of his Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

As encouraged by Cabinet Office guidance to set challenging deadlines, the Northern Ireland Office has a target of responding within 15 working days where a response is required.

As you will understand, the Northern Ireland Office is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to Covid-19. The Northern Ireland Office ensures that urgent cases raised by hon. Members are prioritised, and is taking steps to provide substantive responses in as short a time as possible.

All correspondence received from hon. Members is being reviewed and will be responded to as soon as possible.

**■ Trade: Northern Ireland****Louise Haigh:**[\[48537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 47 of the New Decade, New Approach agreement, whether he plans to ensure that legislation on unfettered trade access applies to east-west trade from Great Britain to Northern Ireland; and when the Government plans to bring forward legislative proposals on that policy area.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government set out its approach to implementing the Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol on 20 May. This paper reaffirms the Government's commitment, first made in the *New Decade, New Approach* agreement to provide unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the rest of the UK. We will legislate to guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland businesses to the whole of the UK internal market, and ensure this legislation is in force by 1 January 2021.

On movements from the rest of the UK to Northern Ireland, we will not levy tariffs on goods remaining within the UK customs territory. While there will be some limited additional process on goods arriving in Northern Ireland, delivery and implementation of the Protocol provisions is for the UK (including, where appropriate, devolved Northern Ireland authorities), and this will be conducted taking account of all flexibilities and discretion, and we will make full use of the concept of de-dramatisation.

**Louise Haigh:**

[\[48538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his oral contribution of 13 May 2020, Official Report column 235, whether unfettered access excludes (a) import declarations and (b) entry summary declarations on goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government set out its approach to implementing the Protocol on 20 May, affirming our commitment to legislate to guarantee unfettered access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK internal market, and ensure that this legislation is in force for 1 January 2021. This means there will be no import customs declarations as goods enter the rest of the UK from Northern Ireland and no entry summary ('safety and security') declaration as goods enter the rest of the UK from Northern Ireland.

## SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### ■ Election Offences: Prosecutions

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[48935\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, whether the Commission (a) plans to enable itself to take prosecutions to court without prior police investigation, and (b) currently is entitled to empower itself to do so.

**Christian Matheson:**

Later this year the Electoral Commission will be consulting with political parties, with police and prosecution authorities, and with the public on changes to its Enforcement Policy. This will include proposals setting out how we will decide to bring prosecutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This does not require a change in legislation and will bring the Commission's regulatory work in line with a wide range of other regulators.

When the capability is in place, the Commission will be able to investigate and bring lower order offences before the courts in a way which is swift and proportionate, and complies with the necessary investigation standards. It will act as an important deterrent to those tempted to break electoral law, deliver more effective regulation of political finance and support public confidence. It will also free up the resources of the

police and prosecutors, although they will remain in the lead on complex and more serious criminal investigations.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Airports: Coronavirus

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[48978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to discuss with his overseas counterparts an agreement on a common international standard for healthcare screening at airports.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

There are weekly meetings of the International Civil Aviation Organisation Council Aviation Recovery Task-Force which was set up specifically to address the aviation industry's recovery from the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This brings together states, multilateral organisations and industry bodies. The UK takes a leading role in this forum, and in its associated sub-groups.

The UK also plays an active role in the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) which has regular meetings. Potential common health measures for aviation are discussed in both of these forums. Finally, the Secretary of State has met with foreign transport ministers to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on international aviation.

### ■ Aviation: Coronavirus

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[49011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times the (a) Captain and (b) First Officer of a scheduled flight into the UK (i) radioed and (ii) communicated ahead to (A) Airport Arrivals and (B) Air Traffic Control at each airport with a request in relation to a suspected case of covid-19 on their flight in each of the last five months.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The information requested is not held centrally. The information may be available from individual airports and air traffic control providers, which operate in the private sector.

Carriers have been requested to report on the health of passengers through General Aircraft Declarations (GAD) prior to disembarkation. This information is held by Public Health England.

### ■ British Airways: Coronavirus

**Mr David Jones:**

[\[48306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Directors of the International Consolidated Airlines Group on the proposed redundancies at British Airways.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

It would not be appropriate to comment on individual discussions. However, we recognise that this will be very distressing news for BA employees and their families, and we stand ready to support them.

The aviation sector is essential to the UK economy, and firms can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures, including: schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees. If airlines find themselves in trouble because of coronavirus, and have exhausted the measures already available to them, the Government is prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort, having exhausted all other options. Any intervention would need to represent value for money for taxpayers.

**■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus****Ms Angela Eagle:**[\[48951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that relief crews are able to take over from UK seafarers who have remained at sea as a result of the outbreak of covid-19 so that they can return to the UK.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

UK has not placed restrictions on the transit and transfer of seafarers and I personally wrote to the International Maritime Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation on 23 March 2020, confirming that the UK will continue to meet its international obligations related to the transit and transfer of seafarers and highlighted that the UK is fully committed to the welfare of all seafarers regardless of their nationality, asking other States to follow this example.

The Government has ensured quarantine requirements for those travelling into UK, announced on 22 May, do not apply to crew or marine pilots travelling in the operation of their duties.

The Government is continuing to monitor the welfare of all UK seafarers and is working to support employers in their repatriation efforts for all non-essential staff.

The Department is currently considering the framework, recently developed by the International Chamber of Shipping and other organisations, which has been supported and circulated by the International Maritime Organisation, in more detail to see what more can be done to further facilitate crew changes in UK.

**■ Bus Services: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:**[\[49006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the private coach sector.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Chancellor announced £330 billion of loans and guarantees, to financially support businesses, such as coach operators, through this time. The measures



include the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Time to Pay and VAT deferral. The Department continues to work closely with the coach sector to understand what the ongoing risks and issues are, and how these could be addressed.

## ■ Commuters

**Ian Lavery:** [\[48433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long the average commute to work is for employees in (a) Wansbeck constituency, (b) the North East, (c) England and (c) the UK.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The average commute to work distance for employees in (a) Wansbeck constituency, (b) the North East, (c) England is shown in the table below. DfT do not routinely collect the required data to provide information for (d) the UK.

|  | AVERAGE COMMUTE (MILES) |
|--|-------------------------|
| (a) Wansbeck constituency <sup>2</sup> | 11.4                    |
| (b) the North East <sup>1</sup>        | 8.4                     |
| (c) England <sup>1</sup>               | 9.0                     |

<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on the Department's 2017 and 2018 National Travel Survey for English residents travelling in Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2011 Census data published by the Office for National Statistics. Population is all usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment the week before the census.

## ■ Cycling and Electric Scooters: Coronavirus

**Douglas Chapman:** [\[48481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) Northern Ireland will receive under Barnett consequential to help provide for (i) pop-up cycle lanes and (ii) e-scooter trials as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Further details of the allocation of the funding for cycling and walking infrastructure and details of e-scooter trials will be announced shortly.

## ■ Heathrow Airport: Coronavirus

**Lisa Nandy:** [\[48977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of trials of large-scale temperature checks to help screen arriving and departing passengers for suspected covid-19 infection at Heathrow Airport.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Temperature testing is not currently a requirement at UK airports, however we are keeping all measures under constant review to ensure our approach is determined by the latest situation and is informed by the latest scientific findings. We have been engaging closely with London Heathrow Airport on the implementation of their temperature screening trial and are keen to see the results.

The department's Chief Scientific Advisor has advised there are some limitations of temperature testing such as some symptomatic cases not always having a high temperature through the period when they are infectious. Therefore, it is important that any changes to our approach will be led by advice from SAGE and the Chief Medical Officer. Protecting the health of the UK public will always come first.

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line****Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[48929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much HS2 Ltd has paid to date for costs incurred by (a) Thames Valley Police and (b) other police force in providing the extra policing of HS2 works.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd has paid no costs to Thames Valley or to any other police forces for extra policing costs as result of HS2 works.

HS2 Ltd has an Enhanced Police Service Agreement (EPSA) with the British Transport Police for a National Police Liaison Officer, an Analyst and an Intelligence Researcher. This function supports strategic and tactical coordination across all forces that the route will pass through. The costs for the EPSA so far are as follows:

- 2016/17: £31,261.26
- 2017/18: £100,185.95
- 2018/19: £104,803.18
- 2019/20: £125,782

**■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Chalfont St Giles****Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[49140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the licence that permitted HS2 to remove parts of the hedgerows in Chalfont St Giles; and what impact assessment was made of the effect of that removal on the bird nesting season in that area.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017, which underwent several years of parliamentary scrutiny, gives HS2 Ltd the authority to remove hedgerows for the construction of Phase One of HS2. Therefore no licences were required for the removal of part of the hedgerows in Chalfont St Giles.

The Environmental Statement for Phase One of HS2, which was published alongside the Bill, reported the results of the environmental impact assessment, including impacts on hedgerows. Where habitat clearance works need to be conducted during the nesting season, an Ecological Clerk of Works is present to identify nesting birds and stop works if necessary. If an active bird nest is found, works cease in that area and an exclusion zone is set up around the specific location to avoid disturbance that could cause adults to abandon the nest. This restriction remains in place until any chicks have fledged. This approach follows industry standard best practice.

## ■ High Speed Two: Incentives

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[48930]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what bonus the CEO of HS2 Ltd is due to receive for the current year of their contract; and what the criteria are for receipt of that bonus.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The HS2 Ltd CEO has voluntarily agreed to waive any bonus payment entitled to be paid to him this year.

The criteria for receipt of the bonus, had it not been voluntarily waived, focused on five key areas of performance in 2019/20: health, safety and wellbeing; annual control of budget; performance against annual milestones and schedule; organisational capability including talent and diversity; and community engagement. These areas of performance will still be reported on as usual, in the company's Annual Report and Accounts.

## ■ High Speed Two: Pay

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**

**[48931]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will he publish the (a) annual salaries and (b) bonuses paid to HS2 Ltd personnel in the last 12 months.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

In line with the Government's policy on transparency, HS2 Ltd publishes details of salaries and director remuneration in the company's Annual Report and Accounts and, where applicable, on the Cabinet Office website. The next report, which covers 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, will be available by the end of July 2020. Previous reports, dating back to the 2009-10 financial year, are available on the gov.uk website here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-annual-reports-and-accounts#annual-reports-and-accounts>

In the last 12 months the following bonus payments were made to three individuals that achieved agreed performance criteria in the 2018/19 financial year: £36,743; £24,710 and £15,975.

## ■ International Transport: Coronavirus

**Lisa Nandy:**

[\[48976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe for coming into force is for the measures in relation to international travel contained in the document entitled, Our plan to rebuild: the UK Government's covid-19 recovery strategy, published on 11 May 2020.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Home Office announced on 22 May that it currently intends to introduce these measures on 8 June.

## ■ Motorcycles: Coronavirus

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[48479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the safety of motorcycling as an alternative method of transport during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We assessed the safety of motorcycling as part of the recent update of the Department's Road Safety Statement, published on 19 July 2019, which provides steps to improve motorcycle safety.

The Department's guidance issued on 12 May refers to "Private cars and other vehicles" as an alternative to using public transport, and encourages the public to "consider all other forms of transport before using public transport". This would include private vehicles such as motorcycles and mopeds where the journey to be made is appropriate.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[48945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to promote the use of powered two wheelers as an alternative to public transport; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

As part of the recent update of the Department's Road Safety Statement, published on 19 July 2019, we committed to ensuring motorcyclists have the necessary skills in order to stay safe on the road.

The Department's guidance issued on 12 May refers to "Private cars and other vehicles" as an alternative to using public transport and encourages the public to "consider all other forms of transport before using public transport". This would include private vehicles such as motorcycles and mopeds where the journey to be made is appropriate.

## ■ Motorcycles: Training

**Margaret Ferrier:** [48477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 April 2020 to Question 39656 on Motorcycles: driving instruction and with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what guidance his Department has issued on arrangements for motorcyclists who need to renew their Compulsory Basic Training certificate: and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) are continuing to provide emergency tests for those whose work is critical to the coronavirus response. DVSA has provided information on how a candidate can apply for one of these tests on GOV.UK at the following link <https://www.gov.uk/apply-emergency-driving-test>. This includes details of what evidence is needed to demonstrate a candidate meets the critical worker criteria.

**Margaret Ferrier:** [48478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2020 to Question 39656 on Motorcycles: driving instruction, if centres providing Compulsory Basic Training for motorcyclists are permitted to operate in line with public health guidance on the containment of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, approved training bodies can continue to provide CBT instruction for workers whose role is critical in the COVID-19 response. It is the responsibility of the trainer, and the pupil, to consider the risks to their health and the need for any protective equipment before going ahead with the training.

## ■ Railways: Coronavirus

**Clive Lewis:** [48546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the requirement for Eurostar passengers entering the UK to wear face masks does not apply to passengers on other railway services operating in the UK during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Eurostar runs international services to several destinations in Europe, including Brussels and Paris and, as such, must comply with the requirements of the countries it operates in. In line with guidelines announced by the French and Belgian governments, Eurostar has amended its Conditions of Carriage to require all passengers to bring and wear a face covering for all Eurostar services across its full route to provide clarity for its passengers.

However, the Government has also been clear that it is advising passengers in England, where they can, to wear a face covering if they need to use public transport.

**Clive Lewis:**

[\[48547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that all frontline railway workers are equipped with adequate personal protective equipment.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Railway workers play a vital part in ensuring passengers and goods continue to move across the country, and we have been clear their safety remains a priority. Employers are protecting staff in line with government advice, and are taking all necessary steps to make their workplaces COVID-secure – for example, by reconfiguring the workplace to enable social distancing, providing hand sanitiser and hand washing facilities, and continuing their enhanced cleaning regimes. Employers have carried out necessary risk assessments and are providing PPE in accordance with these assessments.

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[49092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to reduced train capacity in the event that social distancing measures are enforced, what plans he has to prevent a significant increase in the use of private cars by commuters.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Guidance to passengers has been clear that they should stay local and walk or cycle where possible. This message is being reinforced across government, for example to children returning to school and their carers. The government has also released £250m for schemes to support increased walking and cycling in England. At the same time, services on public transport will continue to increase.

## ■ Railways: Devon

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[48451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department still plans to fund the Parson's Tunnel to Teignmouth rail resilience project.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government remains absolutely committed to improving train lines to the South West through enhancing the resilience of the railway at Dawlish and Teignmouth. Network Rail is continuing to develop plans for the section between Parsons Tunnel and Teignmouth in preparation for a Transport & Works Act Order (TWAo) application. The Government will continue to assess the case for funding the scheme, following the process set out in the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

## ■ Railways: Kingston upon Thames

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[49091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made with the Mayor of London on the effect of social distancing requirements during the covid-19 outbreak on train capacity in Kingston; and what plans the Government has to provide

financial support to local authority leaders in Kingston to encourage sustainable modes of travel to work.

**Rachel Maclean:**

During the Covid-19 outbreak, capacity across public transport networks is constrained to allow social distancing. The Government's message is clear that public transport should only be used for essential journeys and passengers should, wherever possible, find alternative methods of travel.

The London Borough of Kingston upon Thames has recently been allocated an indicative £100,000 from the Emergency Active-Travel Fund to help the borough fund pop-up and temporary interventions to create an environment for safe walking and cycling in the borough.

■ **Rolling Stock: Coronavirus**

**Grahame Morris:**

[49660]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State of 7 April 2020 to the Transport Select Committee, how much has been paid to rolling stock companies as a result of the Emergency Measures Agreements with the Train Operating Companies.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Train Operating Companies are continuing to pay the contractually agreed rental cost for rolling stock as they were prior to the Emergency Measures Agreements.

Statistics on costs are published at: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/>

**Grahame Morris:**

[49661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to protect the public from the high costs of operating leases on privately owned rolling stock as a result of the Emergency Measures Agreements with train operating companies.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Rolling stock contracts are fixed over the term of the original franchise and were competitively procured by the operators; the same payments will continue through the period of the EMA.

**Grahame Morris:**

[49662]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to introduce a derogation from contractual obligations to pay operating lease charges for rolling stock.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

These leases were competitively procured and contractually binding. The operators will require all their rolling stock to manage social distancing.

**Grahame Morris:**

[49663]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) capping or (b) suspending the payment of operating lease charges for rolling stock during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

There has been no assessment made as these are legally binding contracts between the train operator and the rolling stock company. The expectation is that all contracted rolling stock will be required to manage social distancing on trains. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began I have met with the main rolling stock companies to discuss how they can support industry and the country during this time.

**■ Transport: Coronavirus****Clive Lewis:**[\[48545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will extend the compensation scheme for families of NHS and care workers who die of covid-19 to transport workers in recognition of the vital services that they are providing during the outbreak of that disease.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announced on 27th April a scheme where families of eligible NHS and care workers, who die from coronavirus in the course of their frontline work, will receive a £60,000 payment. The Government will continue to review the support provided to key workers on the front-line.

**TREASURY****■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Aberdeen****Stephen Flynn:**[\[49835\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses in Aberdeen have (a) applied and (b) been approved for a loan from the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

**Stephen Flynn:**[\[49836\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many businesses in Scotland have (a) applied and (b) been approved for a Business Bounce Back Loan.

**John Glen:**

The Bounce Back Loans Scheme (BBLs), which was launched on 4 May, helps the smallest businesses access loans of up to £50,000 within days.

HM Treasury carefully monitors the progress of the scheme, including by collecting data on applications and loans directly from accredited lenders. However, this data is commercially sensitive and provided in confidence by each lender, so can only be disclosed at an aggregate level.

Since its launch, lenders have approved over 464,000 Bounce Back Loans worth a total value of over £14bn. HM Treasury is now regularly publishing the total number and value of loans approved under the scheme.



**■ Charities: Coronavirus****Barbara Keeley:****[48371]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on extending the Small Business Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant to organisations receiving charity rates relief.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Charities which occupy properties used for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes, such as charity shops, may be eligible for a grant from the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The RHLGF provides businesses with a £25,000 cash grant per property, for each property used for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000; and a £10,000 cash grant per property, for each property used for these purposes with a rateable value of £15,000 or below which is not in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief. Businesses and organisations may receive a maximum of €800,000 from the RHLGF under State Aid rules.

The Government is aware that some small businesses and organisations have found themselves excluded from the existing business grants schemes because of the way they interact with the business rates system. That is why the Government has allocated up to an additional £617 million to Local Authorities to enable them to give discretionary grants to businesses in this situation. The Government's intention is for Local Authorities to prioritise the following types of organisations when making discretionary grants:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible work spaces for example, industrial parks, science parks, incubators etc, which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- B&Bs which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

Local Authorities may choose to focus payments on those priority groups which are most relevant to their local areas. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses outside of these priority groups, according to local economic need, so long as the business was trading on 11th March, and has not received any other cash grant funded by central Government.

**Barbara Keeley:****[48372]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on providing dedicated grant support to charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced a £750 million support package for charities. £360m of this will be allocated as grants directly to charities providing essential services and

supporting vulnerable people. £310m will support smaller, local charities, including through grants distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund. £60m will be allocated to the Devolved Administrations through the Barnett formula. The Government pledged to match whatever the public donated to the BBC Big Night In fundraiser on 23 April, with a minimum of £20m going to the National Emergencies Trust.

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[48373\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the £160 million announced for charities due to the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak will be received by charities.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced a £750m support package for charities. £360m of this will be allocated directly to charities providing essential services and supporting vulnerable people, including up to £200m for hospices across the next quarter. St John Ambulance has been allocated £6.8m, which has already supported an increased operational response. Charities can now apply on gov.uk for £10m to support victims of domestic abuse and £6m to support members of the armed forces and veterans. A further £310m will support smaller, local charities, including through grants distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund. £60m will be allocated to the Devolved Administrations through the Barnett formula. The Government pledged to match whatever the public donated to the BBC Big Night In fundraiser on 23 April, with a minimum of £20m going to the National Emergencies Trust.

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[48648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits for charities of raising the rateable value threshold for the Coronavirus Business Rates Relief scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The twelve-month business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure properties applies to all properties used for these purposes, regardless of their rateable value.

There is a rateable value threshold for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF). The RHLGF has been designed to help small businesses in some of the sectors which have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only properties used for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes with a rateable value of under £51,000 can access grants under that scheme. £51,000 is the accepted threshold in the business rates system for a "small" business, as only businesses which occupy properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 can benefit from the Small Business Multiplier rate. This threshold applies across England, thus providing a straightforward existing basis which Local Authorities can use to issue grants.

Larger businesses and charities may have access to other forms of support which the Government has announced, such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The Government continues to monitor the economic situation and is keeping support to businesses and other organisations under review.

## ■ Charities: Finance

**Rosie Cooper:**

**[48336]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will ensure that local authorities are provided with sufficient funding to provide grants to all charities in receipt of charitable rate relief.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is aware that some small businesses and organisations have found themselves excluded from the existing business grants schemes because of the way they interact with the business rates system. That is why the Government has allocated up to an additional £617 million to Local Authorities to enable them to give discretionary grants to organisations in this situation. The Government's intention is for Local Authorities to prioritise the following types of organisation when making discretionary grants:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces for example, industrial parks, science parks, incubators etc, which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- B&Bs which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

Local Authorities may choose to focus payments on those priority groups which are most relevant to their local areas. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to organisations outside of these priority groups, according to local economic need, so long as the organisation was trading on 11th March, and has not received any other cash grant funded by central Government (with the exception of grants from the SEISS).

In addition, the Government has announced a £750m support package for charities. £360m of this will be allocated directly to charities providing essential services and supporting vulnerable people, including up to £200m for hospices across the next quarter. A further £310m will support smaller, local charities, including through grants distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund. £60m will be allocated to the Devolved Administrations through the Barnett formula. The Government pledged to match whatever the public donated to the BBC Big Night In fundraiser on 23 April, with a minimum of £20m going to the National Emergencies Trust.

## ■ City Region Deals: West of England

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[48513\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of underwriting the City Region Deal for the West of England to remove the financial risk from the unitary authorities of the economic downturn caused as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The devolution deal agreed between Government and West of England Combined Authority provides the region with several grant funding streams, such as a 30-year commitment to £30m p/a of 'gainshare' funding, as well as devolved budgets and powers across transport and skills. Government has committed to these funding streams in the devolution deal it agreed with the West of England – this should provide reassurance to the local area that this funding will continue to come forward.

The constituent Local Authorities of the West of England have received support from a significant package of Government funding to help them meet pressures resulting from Covid-19, with Local Authorities in the region receiving over £50m of the £3.2bn of new grant funding approved.

## ■ Community Development Finance Institutions: Coronavirus

**Jane Stevenson:**

[\[49847\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to increase the support that community development financial institutions can offer to SMEs during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the vital role that non-banks – including Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) – play in the provision of credit to SMEs. It is grateful for the way the sector has responded to the current crisis and remains committed to promoting competition and widening the funding options available to UK businesses.

The Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provides financial support to SMEs across the UK that are losing revenue, and seeing their cashflow disrupted, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Of the 80 lenders currently accredited by the British Business Bank to offer these loans, 15 are CDFIs. The Government welcomes CDFIs' participation in CBILS, as well as their continued work to support SMEs beyond this loan scheme.

On broader support for CDFIs, Fair4All Finance, the independent body set up to distribute dormant assets funding to support financial inclusion, has set up a £5 million resilience fund to support credit unions and CDFIs in England. Fair4All Finance have also launched their Affordable Credit Scale-up Programme, designed to provide tailored support to sustainably scale affordable credit.

On 20 May, the Government announced that £65 million of funding through the dormant assets scheme will be released immediately to Fair4All Finance, to increase access to fair, affordable and appropriate financial products and services for those struggling financially, particularly in light of the coronavirus outbreak. This includes an expanded Affordable Credit Scale-up Programme, which aims to improve the access and availability of affordable credit. Additional funding will be made available to the devolved administrations under normal processes through the dormant assets scheme, to be distributed as they see fit.

### ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[48452\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have been furloughed through the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme in each sector of the economy since the start of that scheme.

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[48453\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many organisations have applied for support through the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme since the start of that scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

Applications for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) opened on Monday 20 April. By midnight on 24 May, one million employers had submitted claims to HMRC representing 8.4m furloughed employments and £15bn.

This is a new scheme and HMRC are currently working through the analysis they will be able to provide based on the data available. HMRC will make the timescales for publication and the types of data available in due course.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[48482\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961, by what means holders of National Insurance numbers will be made aware that funds have been disbursed to an employer in response to a claim submitted under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme quoting that number; and what the timescale is for that notification.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC will not contact individual employees in respect of CJRS claims; if an individual employee has a query in respect of a claim, they should direct this query to their employer.

If an employee is concerned that their employer could be abusing the scheme, they should make a report using the Report Fraud to HMRC iForm on GOV.UK; a link to this iForm is included in the CJRS employee guidance on GOV.UK.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[48484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on

enforcement of the obligation on employers to utilise funds paid under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in accordance with clause 2.2 of the Schedule to the Treasury Direction dated 15 April 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government expects the vast majority of employers to do the right thing, but HMRC reserve the right to follow up on claims and take whatever action is necessary if people abuse the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Fraudulent claims put at risk the provision of public services and the protection of livelihoods.

The CJRS is a reserved matter and the responsibility for compliance remains with HMRC.

The Government has engaged and is continuing to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Devolved Administrations, to inform the development and use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[48486\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, how many submissions of the iForm referred to in that Answer have been made in each of the last five tax years; what estimate he has made of the number of submissions that will be made in the 2020-21 tax year; and how many submissions of that iForm had been received by 12 May 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The total number of iForm submissions made to the tax fraud hotline on GOV.UK in each tax year, for the last 5 tax years (1 April to 31 March) were:

2019/20: 65,169

2018/19: 58,664

2017/18: 57,631

2016/17: 49,686

2015/16: 40,044

6,613 iForm submissions were made between 1 April to 12 May 2020. HM Revenue and Customs do not routinely produce estimates of the volume of expected allegations submitted through this reporting pathway.

**Kirsten Oswald:**

[\[48488\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, what support he is providing to bodies representing workers on part-time and zero hours contracts to ensure that the obligation on employers to properly utilise funds paid under that scheme is widely known among qualifying PAYE employees.

**Kirsten Oswald:****[48489]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, what engagement he has had with employers' representatives and trade unions to ensure that the obligation on employers to properly utilise funds paid under that scheme is widely known among qualifying PAYE employees.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has published clear guidance for employers and employees, and has supported employers through the provision of webinars, and dedicated communications.

HMRC have provided a clear link for employees to report any suspicions about employers abusing the scheme (using the iForm on GOV.UK). Furthermore, the claims process for employers makes clear that grants need to be paid to the employee in full.

HMRC have included messaging about the proper use of funds paid under the scheme in their emails to agents (about 80,000) and employers (just over 2 million). HMRC have also included information in messaging that has gone out to key stakeholders, which include bodies representing a wide range of interests.

The Government keeps its communication strategy under regular review.

**Claire Hanna:****[48667]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how the employer contribution will be implemented to ensure that staff continue to receive at least 80 per cent of their salary following the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond August 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

On 29 May, the Chancellor announced plans for introducing employer contributions into the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, while ensuring that employees continue to receive 80% of regular wages while furloughed.

In June and July, the Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 as well as employer National Insurance Contributions (ER NICs) and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will have to pay employees for the hours they work.

In August, the Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 and employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work.

In September, the Government will pay 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 10% of wages to make up the 80% total, up to a cap of £2,500.

In October, the Government will pay 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 20% of wages to make up the 80% total, up to a cap of £2,500.



The cap will be proportional to the hours not worked.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[49125\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of whether the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme applies to freelancers who have been contracted by public service broadcasters.

**Jesse Norman:**

In March, the Government announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to help firms to keep millions of people in employment. Furloughed 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 the 19 March 2020. Employees can be on any type of contract, including a zero-hour contract or a temporary contract. It is expected that the public sector's use of the CJRS will be limited, as many public sector workers continue to provide essential public services or contribute to the COVID-19 response. Organisations with staff costs that continue to be fully funded by public grants are expected to continue to pay their staff as normal, and not to furlough them. Freelancers who are employees should discuss their specific cases directly with their employer. Some people will not be eligible for this grant, but they may have access to other support which the Government is providing, including: a package of temporary welfare measures, including an increase in the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element; an additional £500 million for local councils to support the most vulnerable people in society; and mortgage payment holidays for those in difficulty with mortgage payments.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Charities

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[48370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to allow charity employees who would otherwise have been made redundant to continue working.

**Jesse Norman:**

Any employer using a PAYE scheme can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. To mitigate the risk of fraudulent claims and to protect individuals, the Government made it clear that individuals cannot work or volunteer for their organisation. If workers were allowed to volunteer for their employer, the employer could ask them to work in an effectively full time way while only paying 80% of the wages

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is working with other Government departments and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to identify areas where volunteers can contribute to the COVID-19 response.



## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Public Sector

**Munira Wilson:** [\[48644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether public sector organisations can re-hire employees who stopped working for them on or after 28 February 2020 for the purposes of furloughing them through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

If an individual was made redundant or stopped working for a public sector employer after 28 February, the employer can agree to re-employ that individual and place them on furlough, provided that the individual is not on furlough from another organisation.

Before furloughing individuals, public sector employers should first explore opportunities for the individual to be re-employed and redeployed elsewhere in the public sector, and should only claim through the scheme in line with guidance for public sector employers on the appropriate use of the scheme and the receipt of public funding.

The employer is under no obligation to re-employ and furlough staff.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Sole Traders

**Sir Charles Walker:** [\[48957\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will amend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme so that sole traders, acting as limited companies, that complete their yearly payroll after 19 March can access that scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

To be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), firms must have created and started a PAYE payroll scheme on or before 19 March 2020; enrolled for PAYE online; and have a UK bank account.

Processing claims for the CJRS where there was no RTI data by 19 March would require much greater manual handling by HMRC and 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.

Individuals may have access to a range of grants and loans depending on their circumstances, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the deferral of tax payments.

## ■ Council Tax: Coronavirus

**Karin Smyth:** [\[48514\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a council tax support grant for local authorities that face significant shortfalls in council tax as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Government has provided councils with a significant package of support to help them meet a range of pressures they face as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have announced over £3.2bn of new funding for councils and over £5bn of further measures to support councils' cashflow.

**■ Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility****Catherine West:**[\[48569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the names of successful applicants to the Covid Corporate Financing Facility.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

On 19 May HM Treasury and the Bank announced that they would publish the names of businesses that have drawings under the CCFF, as well as the amounts borrowed. These details will be published by the Bank every Thursday, beginning on 4 June at 15:00hrs (GMT).

**■ Directors: Coronavirus****Olivia Blake:**[\[48672\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support Directors of small businesses during the covid-19 outbreak; and if will he introduce financial support measures for those Directors.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency including almost £300 billion of guarantees – equivalent to 15% of UK GDP. The directors of small businesses, and other self-employed individuals, may benefit from a range of support measures including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) – company directors paid annually through PAYE are eligible to claim if they meet the relevant conditions
- A 12-month business rates holiday for all eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England
- Small business grant funding (SBGF) of £10,000 for all business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief
- The retail, hospitality and leisure grant fund (RHLGF)
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises
- VAT deferral for up to 12 months
- The Time To Pay scheme, through which businesses and self-employed individuals in financial distress, and with outstanding tax liabilities, can receive support with their tax affairs

- Protection for commercial leaseholders against automatic forfeiture for non-payment until June 30, 2020
- A 3-month mortgage holiday

The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, when the schemes open and how to apply - <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support>. And details of the range of support for individuals affected by COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>.

## ■ Economics of Biodiversity Review

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[49651]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to apply the interim findings of the Dasgupta review on the economics of biodiversity to decisions on economic policy and spending decisions being made in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Protecting and enhancing the UK's natural capital assets is essential to delivering on the government's ambitious environmental agenda and ensuring a strong and sustainable economic recovery from the impacts of Covid-19. The government welcomes Professor Dasgupta's interim report and looks forward to receiving and responding to the full report in due course.

## ■ Financial Services: Codes of Practice

**Neil Gray:**

**[48468]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the pause in the Financial Conduct Authority's consultation on Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers on (a) people living with cancer and (b) other vulnerable consumers; and what steps he is taking to support those people.

**John Glen:**

The Government is committed to doing whatever it takes to get our nation through this crisis and that includes supporting the most vulnerable in our society. To this end, the Government continues to work closely with financial services regulators as part of the economic response.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has introduced measures supporting consumers in financial difficulty at this time, and requires firms to prioritise vulnerable consumers, including those with poor health.

In response, firms across the financial services sector have announced a range of measures to support vulnerable customers and the Government is working with the FCA to ensure there is continued support. For example, many firms have methods for

trusted third-parties to access cash for vulnerable/self-isolating people, as well as setting up dedicated phone lines to support them.

Since the COVID-19 crisis has developed, the Government has also worked closely with the FCA on the introduction of payment deferral periods to provide support to consumers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition, the FCA consulted on draft guidance on the fair treatment of vulnerable consumers in July 2019, which may be useful to firms at this time. This guidance focuses on firms' considering and meeting the needs of vulnerable customers and embedding this thinking in their culture, practices, and processes throughout the whole consumer journey, from product design to customer service. The second consultation in March was postponed due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The FCA are currently developing their understanding of how COVID-19 is impacting vulnerable consumers and how it should influence their policy approach. As part of this they are considering how and when to restart the vulnerability guidance consultation.

## ■ Future Fund

**Fleur Anderson:**

[48654]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the £500m Future Fund announced on 20 April 2020 will open for applications.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Future Fund will open to applications on 20 May. Further details and guidance are available on the British Business Bank website: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-schemes/future-fund/>.

## ■ Government Assistance: Coronavirus

**Stella Creasy:**

[48979]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether businesses that operate from a business unit with a rateable value of up to £51,000 are eligible for the (a) Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant and (b) discretionary fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, businesses can receive:

- A £10,000 cash grant per property, for each property used for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes with a rateable value of £15,000 or below which is not in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief;
- A £25,000 cash grant per property, for each property used for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000.

The Government is aware that some small businesses have found themselves excluded from the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund and the Small Business Grant Fund because of the way they interact with the business rates system. That is why the Government has allocated up to an additional £617 million to Local

Authorities to enable them to give discretionary grants to businesses in this situation. The Government's intention is for Local Authorities to prioritise the following types of business when making discretionary grants:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible work spaces for example, industrial parks, science parks, incubators etc, which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- B&Bs which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

Local Authorities may choose to focus payments on those priority groups which are most relevant to their local areas. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses outside of these priority groups, according to local economic need, so long as the business was trading on 11th March, and has not received any other cash grant funded by central Government. Grants should also primarily and predominantly be aimed at businesses which occupy property with a rateable value below £51,000.

Small businesses which are not eligible for business grants should still be able to benefit from other elements of the Government's unprecedented package of support for business, including:

- An option to defer VAT payments by up to twelve months;
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme, which will ensure that small and micro businesses can quickly access loans of up to £50,000 which are 100 per cent guaranteed by the Government;
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, now extended to cover all businesses including those which would be able to access commercial credit;
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to support businesses with their wage bills; and
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, to provide support to the self-employed.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[R] [\[49039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the recommendations in Hospitality Union's #NationalTimeOut campaign; and what recent steps he has taken to support the hospitality industry during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

During this difficult time the Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups and other government departments to understand the long-term effects of social distancing across all key areas of the economy.

We appreciate the concerns of Hospitality Union's NationalTimeOut campaign and the Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on businesses and sectors like hospitality.

That is why the Chancellor has already announced unprecedented support for individuals and businesses, to protect against the current economic emergency. This includes changes to our welfare system including Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay; grant schemes such as the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund and the Discretionary Grant Fund, which are primarily and predominantly aimed at small businesses facing high fixed property-related costs; a range of government-backed and guaranteed loan schemes; the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support with regard to supporting public services, businesses, individuals, and sectors such as hospitality. We are also keeping the exit strategy of all schemes under review as we respond to this pandemic and consider the longer-term economic recovery.

**■ Inheritance Tax: Coronavirus****Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[48247\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will temporarily extend the time limit within which inheritance tax must be paid during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is aware of concerns about the six-month deadline for paying inheritance tax and the twelve-month deadline for filing a return. Where a taxpayer is unable to file their return on time because of COVID-19, HMRC will consider that within the scope of a reasonable excuse and as grounds for appeal against late filing penalties. The Government continues to explore all avenues to help those affected.

**■ Members: Correspondence****Dave Doogan:**[\[49118\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the 20 April 2020 correspondence on furlough from the hon. Member for Angus.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Treasury has received unprecedented amounts of correspondence since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, and apologises for the delay in responding to the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member's correspondence is receiving attention and will be replied to as soon as possible.

## ■ Multinational Companies: Government Assistance

**Gerald Jones:** [\[48554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to ensure that businesses headquartered in a recognised tax haven do not receive taxpayer-funded covid-19 support.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support.

This has been targeted at the businesses and individuals who most need assistance, while ensuring that the measures are simple, certain and introduced in a timely manner to protect livelihoods.

The Government expects everyone to act responsibly by only claiming and using support as intended, and is keeping measures under regular review.

The Government continues to be at the forefront of global action to tackle tax avoidance, with a series of robust measures in place to tackle profit shifting arrangements.

## ■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[48653\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of raising the £51,000 business rates limit for covid-19 support grants for businesses in line with the variation in property values in England.

**Jesse Norman:**

The business grants schemes have been designed to help small businesses. £51,000 is the accepted threshold in the business rates system for a “small” business, as only businesses which occupy properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 can benefit from the Small Business Multiplier rate. This threshold applies across England, thus providing a straightforward existing basis which Local Authorities can use to issue grants.

Larger businesses may have access to other forms of support which the Government has announced, such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. In addition, there is no rateable value limit on the business rates holiday for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

The Government continues to monitor the economic situation and is keeping support for businesses and other organisations under review.

## ■ Personal Income: Coronavirus

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[48461\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to support people who are paid a substantial part of their income via commission and have lost that income as a



result of the covid-19 outbreak where that income is not covered as part of the calculation for payments under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The objective of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is to enable employers to keep people in employment. To achieve this, the grants compensate employers for the payments that they are contractually obliged to make, in order to avoid the need for redundancies. Covering discretionary payments, for example commission, would go beyond the objectives of the scheme.

The Government recognises that for some employees, the pay in scope for this emergency grant package will be less than the overall sum they usually receive. The Government is supporting people on low incomes who need to rely on the welfare system through a significant package of temporary measures. This includes a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1 billion increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants. These changes will benefit new and existing claimants. Anyone can check their eligibility and apply for Universal Credit by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

■ **Post Office Card Account**

**Marion Fellows:**

[48674]

To ask the Chancellor for the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who are unable to open a bank account when the contract with Post Office Ltd for the Post Office Card Account ends are able to access cash.

**John Glen:**

The government believes that individuals, regardless of their background or income, should have access to useful and affordable financial products and services, including a bank account.

Basic bank accounts are a key financial inclusion policy. They provide people with a way of receiving income, whether that be salary, pension, benefits or tax credits and enable people to manage their money on a day-to-day basis effectively, securely and confidently. A basic bank account is fee-free for all everyday banking services and has no overdraft facility.

The 9 largest personal current account providers in the UK are legally required to offer fee-free basic bank accounts to customers who do not have a bank account in the UK or who are ineligible for a bank's standard current account.

The Treasury publishes data on basic bank accounts annually. The December 2019 publication shows that in total there are nearly 7.5 million basic bank accounts open in the UK.



For people who cannot access a bank account, the Department for Work and Pensions will continue to offer the HMG Payment Exception Service that allows customers access to funds via PayPoint outlets.

■ **Public Expenditure: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[49005\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on his plans for the review of the green book announced in the 2020 Budget.

**Steve Barclay:**

As set out at Spring Budget, the Government is keen to ensure that government spending is not just narrowly focused on where it will bring the highest immediate return, but also on where it may unlock the productive potential of an area and achieve broader long-term benefits. We are continuing the review of the Green Book and our processes for allocating spending to ensure that all regions and nations of the UK have the opportunity to spread and drive growth. This process will conclude later in the year and the findings of the review will inform this year's Spending Review.

■ **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[49633\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of businesses that will be excluded from the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund due to the exclusion of the event catering industry from the Government's definition of the hospitality industry.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government does not hold this information.

The Government recognises that this is a very challenging time for businesses in a wide variety of sectors. Small businesses occupying properties for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes are likely to be particularly affected by COVID-19 due to their reliance on customer footfall, and the fact that they are less likely than larger businesses to have sufficient cash reserves to meet their high fixed property-related costs. The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund is intended to help small businesses in this situation.

Local Authorities can choose to make discretionary grants to businesses in other sectors if they feel there is a particular local economic need. However, the priority of all the grants schemes continues to be to help the smallest businesses, and small businesses which are facing significant property-related costs and operate in sectors which have been particularly hard hit by the steep decline in customer footfall.

**Rosie Duffield:**

[\[49807\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer to the Answer of 12 May to Question 44022 on Business: Coronavirus, for what reason the amount that businesses with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 are eligible for under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund changed from £25,000 to £10,000 on 9 April 2020; and if he will reinstate the initial award amount eligibility from that fund as issued on 18 March 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The eligibility thresholds for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund have remained the same since the scheme was announced on 17<sup>th</sup> March. We have been working at pace to design grant schemes to support businesses and protect jobs throughout Covid-19. We apologise for a human error made on an early version of a Covid-19 support measures factsheet which stated that the rateable value cut-off for the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund grant was £14,999. This has since been updated on 9<sup>th</sup> April. The guidance to Local Authorities has always been very clear that retail, hospitality and leisure properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or below would be eligible for a £10,000 grant under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[48303\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the duration of the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for self-employed people who cannot go out to work because they have been advised by the NHS to shield and not to leave home for 12 weeks as a result of an underlying health condition.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[48384\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he is having about extending the duration and expanding the scope of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS); whether he will make it his policy to extend SEISS at least as long as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and when he plans to make an announcement about the future of the SEISS.

**Kate Osborne:**

[\[48652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to extend the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to October 2020.

**Tommy Sheppard:**

[\[49040\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme in line with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Carol Monaghan:**

[\[49748\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to make an announcement on the next stage of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an extension to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme on 29 May.

Eligible individuals whose business is adversely affected by COVID-19 will be able to claim a second and final grant when the scheme reopens for further applications in August. Individuals will be able to claim a taxable grant worth 70 per cent of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months' worth of profits and capped at £6,570 in total.

There will be no further changes and no further extensions to the scheme, which continues to be one of the most generous in the world.

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[49041\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, what recent estimate he has made of the number of women whose average income calculation has been reduced by maternity leave taken in the previous three tax years.

**Jesse Norman:**

Eligibility for the SEISS and the size of the grant paid out is based on information provided to HMRC on self-assessment returns. Self-assessment returns do not include information on breaks in trade, such as the dates or the reasons. HMRC do not know why an individual's profits may have dropped from self-assessment returns. As a result, a precise estimate relating to the impact of maternity leave is not available. However, the SEISS grant is calculated based on average profits between 2016/17 and 2018/19. This mitigates any periods of reduced earnings which all self-employed individuals may experience.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[49808\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of excluding pension income from the definition of non-trading income for the purposes of the Self-Employment Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) helps those adversely affected by COVID-19 and is one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world. The SEISS, including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to their non-trading income, is designed to be targeted at those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

Individuals receiving more than half of their income from other sources, such as pensions, could still be eligible for other support. The SEISS is part of a

comprehensive package of support for self-employed people, including Bounce Back loans, income tax deferrals, rental support, increases to Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and various business support measures. 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Greater London

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[49783]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to change the earnings threshold for businesses based in London to enable more self-employed people to access the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

The new Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) helps those adversely affected by COVID-19, and some 95 per cent of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment could benefit from this scheme. The SEISS, including the £50,000 threshold, is designed to ensure it is targeted at those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

The self-employed are a very diverse population. They have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times. Some may see their profits unaffected by the current situation, while others have substantial alternative forms of income: for example, those who had more than £50,000 from self-employment profits in 2017-18 had an average total income of more than £200,000. The self-employed can also offset losses against profits in other years and other forms of income.

Those with average profits above £50,000 could 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/](https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/).

## ■ Shipping: Coronavirus

**Patricia Gibson:**

**[48502]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to ensure continued tax relief for seafarers unable to take to sea due to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Seafarer's Earnings Deduction (SED) offers a 100 per cent reduction in income tax on maritime employment income for UK and EEA resident seafarers who have a qualifying period of time absent from the UK. The qualifying period must be made up of at least 365 days, but return visits to the UK during that time up to a maximum of

183 consecutive days can count towards the qualifying period. This is among the most generous reliefs available to seafarers worldwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented interruption to many industries and businesses, and the Government has announced a broad range of support including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and mortgage holidays for homeowners and landlords.

The Government will keep all taxes under review.

#### ■ Solicitors: Business Premises

**Munira Wilson:** [\[49857\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to extend business rates relief to solicitors firms which occupy premises with a rateable value in excess of £15,000.

**Munira Wilson:** [\[49858\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of solicitors firms that occupy premises with a rateable value in excess of £15,000 and are not eligible for business rates relief.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has not made an estimate.

The Government has provided enhanced support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors through business rates relief given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including solicitors, has also been made available. For example, the Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms keep people in employment, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs through the British Business Bank backed by an 80% Government guarantee, and is deferring VAT payments for this quarter.

The Government will consider any further financial assistance necessary to help businesses get through this period.

#### ■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[49126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing (a) income protection and (b) access to statutory sick pay for freelancers in the creative industries.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) helps those adversely affected by COVID-19. The SEISS means the UK has one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world. The SEISS is available to eligible self-employed individuals in all sectors, including the creative industries. More details

can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme).

Some freelancers will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay if they are classed as employees and if in the past eight weeks, they have earned on average at least £120 per week from a single employer. Statutory Sick Pay is paid by employers and is therefore not suitable for self-employed people.

However, self-employed people can claim benefits during sickness absence, either through Universal Credit (UC) or new style Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

The Government has relaxed the UC minimum income floor meaning that if self-employed claimants' earnings have significantly reduced, their UC award will now increase to reflect their lower earnings.

The contributory ESA is available for people unable to work because they are ill with COVID-19 or self-isolating according to Government advice from the first day of sickness, rather than the eighth. This is paid to both employed and self-employed people who are incapable of work and who have a two years' full NICs record.

#### ■ **Students: Coronavirus**

**Alyn Smith:**

**[49845]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on financial support for students during the covid-19 outbreak over summer 2020 .

**Steve Barclay:**

Education is a devolved matter. The UK Government has announced £3.7 billion of additional funding to the Scottish Government to support people, businesses and public services in Scotland in response to Covid-19. I am regularly in contact with my counterparts to discuss finances more broadly.

#### ■ **Tenants: Coronavirus**

**Alyn Smith:**

**[49844]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on financial support for tenants during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

The UK Government has been working closely with the Scottish Government on the response to the Covid-19 outbreak. To help prevent people getting into financial hardship or rent arrears, the UK Government has put in place an unprecedented support package, including support for businesses to pay staff salaries, as well as a strengthening of the welfare safety net with a nearly £7 billion boost to the welfare system. We have also increased Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents in each area. These significant financial

measures will help to support tenants to continue to pay their living costs, including rental payments.

## ■ Transport for London: Coronavirus

**Gavin Newlands:**

[\[48497\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the Barnett consequential as a result of grant funding and loans provided by his Department to Transport for London during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

The UK government has agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing package for Transport for London to protect key services. This is comprised of £1.095 billion of grant funding from the Department for Transport and a £505 million PWLB loan.

As a result of this package, the devolved administrations will receive over £200 million of additional funding: over £100 million for the Scottish Government, £65 million for the Welsh Government, and over £35 million for the Northern Ireland Executive.

## ■ Treasury: Correspondence

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[49730\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the average length of time was for Ministers of his Department to respond to correspondence from hon. Members in each month in the last two years.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Information on average response times is not held.

However, in 2019, the Treasury replied to 90% of MPs' correspondence within 15 working days.

The Treasury has received unprecedented amounts of correspondence since the start of the coronavirus outbreak in the UK. All Member's correspondence is currently receiving attention and will be responded to as soon as possible.

## ■ VAT

**Patricia Gibson:**

[\[48503\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of applying a credit for the 2020-21 financial year to VAT accounts of £17,000.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has announced a range of measures to help individuals and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, including grants, loans and relief from business rates worth more than £300 billion. On 20 March, the Government announced that UK VAT registered businesses can defer VAT payments due with their VAT returns in the deferral period until March 2021.



While the Government keeps all taxes under review, there are currently no plans to apply a credit to VAT accounts.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Children: Maintenance

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[48511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on maintenance payments under the Child Maintenance Service to parents with care.

**Mims Davies:**

The Government recognises that the income of many separated parents is being impacted by the public health emergency and some receiving parents may receive less maintenance as a result of a paying parent's drop in income. There is insufficient data to estimate the precise economic impact on different groups.

Paying parents are still expected to pay child maintenance throughout this period. Our priority is to maintain the flow of maintenance that is currently being paid, by easing the financial pressure on paying parents and ensuring that we transfer the payments as quickly as possible to receiving parents.

Measures have been introduced to support both paying and receiving parents, whose income drops as a result of the public health emergency. These include increasing the standard rate of Universal Credit and working tax credit for this year by over £1000 per year, benefiting over 4 million of the most vulnerable households. We have also increased 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 in people's pockets.

### ■ Health and Safety Executive

**Andy McDonald:**

[\[49707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans the Health and Safety Executive has to increase its engagement with and awareness amongst the general public.

**Mims Davies:**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is playing a crucial role in the Government's response to Covid-19, including communicating with trade unions, employers and stakeholders to help ensure workplaces are safe environments. This also includes communicating through press and social media channels to increase engagement and awareness with our audiences including the general public.

Following the Government's announcement and the publication of guidance by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy on 11th May 2020 on working safely during the coronavirus pandemic, HSE is currently promoting this



guidance and developing further plans to communicate to protect workers from Covid-19.

Up to date guidance is available on the GOV.UK and HSE web sites and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

or

[https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm\\_source=hse.gov.uk&utm\\_medium=refferal&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_content=home-page-banner](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner)

**Alyn Smith:**

**[49843]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many workplace spot checks the Health and Safety Executive has carried out in each of the last six months.

**Mims Davies:**

The numbers of workplace spot checks the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has carried out in each of the last six months is in the table below:

| YEAR | MONTH                                  | NO. OF PROACTIVE INSPECTIONS |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| 2019 | Dec                                    | 624                          |
| 2020 | Jan                                    | 898                          |
| 2020 | Feb                                    | 1041                         |
| 2020 | Mar                                    | 587                          |
| 2020 | Apr                                    | 78                           |
| 2020 | 1 <sup>st</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> May | 62                           |

The above data was extracted from HSE's operational database on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 and is subject to change e.g. the administrative process of recording the information in the database can take up to 10 days.

In March, HSE temporarily suspended proactive visits to sites to allow social distancing measures to be put in place to protect visiting staff. It has since developed plans for resuming proactive site inspections.

The above data excludes investigations of workplace concerns including those relating to COVID-19, where checks have been made to ensure that measures have been put in place to comply with the law.

## ■ Health and Safety Executive: Finance

**Andy McDonald:** [\[49703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how the £14 million additional funding for the Health and Safety Executive announced in the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's statement on 12 May 2020 is being funded; and for how long that funding will be made available.

**Mims Davies:**

The funding up to a maximum of £14.19m has been made available to the Health and Safety Executive by HM Treasury until 31 March 2021

**Andy McDonald:** [\[49704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the additional volume of (a) call centre staff, (b) inspectors, and (c) equipment that will be provided by the £14 million additional funding for the Health and Safety Executive announced in the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's statement on 12 May 2020; and whether the Government has set targets for each of those categories.

**Andy McDonald:** [\[49705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long it will take for the Health and Safety Executive to put in place additional (a) call centre staff, (b) inspectors and (c) equipment funded by the additional £14 million; and whether the Government has set targets for each of those categories.

**Andy McDonald:** [\[49706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of additional (a) physical and (b) remote inspections that will take place as a result of the additional £14 million in funding for the Health and Safety Executive announced on 12 May 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

An additional sum of up to £14 million has been made available to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to support their advice and regulatory activities, such as extra call centre employees, inspectors and equipment. HSE is currently developing plans and as more businesses return to work, it has begun carrying out proactive checks to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect workers from COVID-19.

## ■ Housing Benefit

**Richard Burgon:** [\[49775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many new claims for housing benefit were made in week since 1 March 2020.

**Will Quince:**

The available information on the number of new claims processed for housing benefit is published quarterly and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-benefit-statistics-on-speed-of-processing--2>

The latest statistics were published in April 2020 and provide data to December 2019.

New claims for Housing Benefit can only be made by people over pension age and working age people living in temporary or supported accommodation. Otherwise, if a working age person requires help with their housing costs they must claim Universal Credit.

## ■ Housing Benefit: Coronavirus

**Stephen Timms:**

**[49576]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether housing benefit claimants unable to return to the UK after an overseas visit as a result of travel restrictions imposed in response to the covid-19 pandemic will continue to be able to receive that benefit for longer than the normal permitted period of absence; and if she will make a statement.

**Will Quince:**

Easements are in place for claimants who are unable to return to Great Britain as a result of travel restrictions. Guidance has been issued to Local Authority staff advising them to keep Housing Benefit claims open where the claimant has informed them that they were temporarily unable to return home due to Covid-19 travel related restrictions.

## ■ Industrial Health and Safety

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

**[48675]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) inspections have been carried out and (b) enforcement notices have been issued by the Health and Safety Executive in each of the last four months.

**Mims Davies:**

The number of proactive inspections carried out and enforcement notices issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in each of the last four months are below:

| CALENDAR MONTH 2020 | PROACTIVE INSPECTIONS | ENFORCEMENT NOTICES<br>SERVED |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| January             | 897                   | 375                           |
| February            | 1040                  | 562                           |
| March               | 587                   | 483                           |
| April               | 78                    | 68                            |
| Up to 18th May      | 50                    | 57                            |

- 1) The above data was extracted from HSE's operational database on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and is subject to change e.g. the administrative process of recording the information in the database can take up to 10 days.
- 2) In March, HSE temporarily suspended proactive visits to sites to allow social distancing measures to be put in place to protect visiting staff. It has since developed plans for resuming proactive site inspections.
- 3) The above data excludes investigations of workplace concerns including those relating to COVID-19, where checks have been made to ensure that measures have been put in place to comply with the law.

## ■ Occupational Pensions: Coronavirus

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[49781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of effect of stock market fluctuations due to the covid-19 outbreak on the value of occupational pensions.

**Guy Opperman:**

The government continues to consider appropriate actions that it can take to protect both the public and the economy from the impacts of COVID-19. We have already introduced a range of measures to support businesses and individuals, ensure financial stability and reinforce social safety nets.

We recognise the pressure on pension investments during these challenging times. However, investments are for the long term and the government does not believe that interventions beyond the easements set out in guidance from the Pensions Regulator would be necessary or proportionate at this time.

On 1 April the Financial Conduct Authority, the Pensions Regulator and the Money and Pensions Service published a joint statement urging savers to take their time when making financial decisions, and to visit the Pension Advisory Service website for free pensions guidance before making any decisions about their retirement savings. <https://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/>

The value of occupational defined benefit pensions is tracked monthly via the Pension Protection Fund [\(PPF\) 7800 index](#). The most recent publication provides an assessment of the funding position of occupational defined benefit pension schemes, comprising both their assets and liabilities, as at 30 April 2020.

In addition, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Financial Survey of Pension Schemes will provide information on the assets and liabilities of occupational pension schemes covering both defined benefit and defined contribution schemes. This is a quarterly survey with the first publication due in 2020.

**■ Pensioners: Income**

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[49782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the household income of pensioners.

**Guy Opperman:**

There is insufficient data to estimate the precise economic impact on different groups.

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.

Since 2010, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension in 2020/21 is around £700 higher than if it had just been up-rated by earnings since April 2010. That's a rise of over £1,900 in cash terms.

**■ Restart Programme: Young People**

**Dan Jarvis:** [\[49697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of establishing a restart programme for 19-25 year olds entering the job market in 2020.

**Mims Davies:**

Jobcentres have already started to re-engage with new and existing claimants and are signposting them to appropriate support to support people through the economic recovery post Covid-19.

DWP is also engaging with a number of external stakeholders including the Youth Employment Group (set up by the Prince's Trust, Youth Employment UK, the Institute for Employment Studies, the Youth Futures Foundation and Impetus) as well as continuing to work across Whitehall to develop appropriate support aimed at young people.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**

**Neil Gray:** [\[48471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the adequate performance of her Department's benefit processing systems as a result of increased demands during the covid-19 outbreak; and if she will publish data on (a) processing times and (b) payment timeliness in each benefit category since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

DWP has redeployed over 8,000 staff on to critical frontline work, streamlined processes and increased the capacity of our IT systems to enable the Department to stand up to unprecedented levels of demand.

We do hold data on benefit processing times, and publish an annual view in the Annual Report and Accounts, which is published here: [Annual Report and Accounts](#). We also publish data on key benefits such as Universal Credit payment timeliness, which is published here: [Universal Credit 2013-2020](#) and on PIP processing times which is published here: [PIP Statistics](#)

**Neil Gray:**

**[48472]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure (a) efficient and (b) effective decision making on new claims for disability benefits during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave on 19 May to question number [45199](#).

#### ■ **State Retirement Pensions: Coronavirus**

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

**[49780]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to maintain the triple lock on state pensions after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Guy Opperman:**

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's immediate focus must be on supporting people and businesses through this difficult period. That is why we announced an extension to the furlough scheme, which has already saved millions of jobs.

Given the unprecedented economic context and the challenges facing the UK economy, we will take stock of the economy and public finances as we exit the current crisis and make the right decisions at that point.

It is premature to speculate about future public finances, budgets and the economy. We are thinking first and foremost about protecting people's health, their jobs and supporting businesses. The Office of Budget Responsibility and the Bank of England have said if we did not do what we are doing today the costs in the future would be far higher.

As with all aspects of Government policy, we will keep tax rates and spending under review, and any decisions on future changes will be taken as part of the annual Budget process in the context of the wider public finances.

#### ■ **Unemployment: Coronavirus**

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[49004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to implement a post covid-19 employment programme to address (a) youth unemployment and (b) long-term unemployment.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department is closely monitoring the evolving economic, labour market and public health situation to identify the most effective ways to help people stay in or close to work while considering the longer term labour market strategy.

We are engaging with a range of external organisations, and devolved and local partners, to better understand the impact of the pandemic, for example on particular places, sectors and groups.

This will ensure that the Department identifies the best measures to support economic recovery and that we put in place the best possible employment support offer.

**■ Unemployment: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:****[48440]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on unemployment in the UK.

**Mims Davies:**

The independent Office for National Statistics' latest estimate of unemployment and employment can be found at;

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest>

Since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic the Government has made an unprecedented effort to protect jobs and livelihoods – with the package of measures the Government has put in place for employers, employees and the self-employed being amongst the most generous in the world.

The Chancellor has announced an unprecedented series of measures to support businesses and their employees to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

DWP is continuing to work with HMT and other Government departments to monitor the evolving economic and labour market situation to identify the most effective ways to help people stay in or close to work both now and in the future.

**■ Universal Credit****Neil Coyle:****[49019]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the average value of advance payments made to new universal credit claimants in each week since 1 March 2020.

**Will Quince:**

Since 1 March, the average amount of a Universal Credit New Claim Advance has been £640.

**Neil Coyle:**

**[49020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average value was of universal credit payments made to new claimants in each week since the beginning of March 2020.

**Will Quince:**

Average weekly payments made to new Universal Credit claimants is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

However, the latest information on average monthly values of payments made to new Universal Credit claimants is published and can be found on Stat-Xplore: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Further guidance can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

**[49794]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish a breakdown of the number of universal credit claimants by employment sector background for each (a) parliamentary constituency and (b) local authority.

**Will Quince:**

We do not systematically collect data on the employment sector background of UC claimants because this does not affect entitlement to UC.

## ■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[45230]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to raise awareness of the option for split payments of universal credit during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* Split payments can be considered by the Jobcentre Work Coach at the outset of the Universal Credit claim, or during it. They can also be triggered and put in place by information received from the claimant, their representative, or their caseworker.

Jobcentre staff remain available to provide support, in person, for vulnerable customers and those in urgent need of help – such as survivors of domestic abuse, or those who have no access to a phone or the internet. This support includes the option of Split Payments to prevent hardship to the claimant and their family.

All Universal Credit colleagues receive training on complex needs, including training on supporting survivors of abuse and how to signpost to expert partner organisations.

They also have access to the latest guidance, on domestic abuse and Alternative Payment Arrangements, including Split Payments.



A further internal guide to support survivors of domestic abuse will be launched, which will further raise awareness of how colleagues can support survivors of abuse.

We work closely with partner organisations and stakeholders and have escalation routes to provide local community based, joined up services. We are maintaining these strong relationships during this difficult time to ensure we continue to support our most vulnerable claimants.

**Seema Malhotra:**

**[48455]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in each age group have claimed for universal credit since 12 March 2020.

**Will Quince:**

Statistics for Universal Credit starts by age can be found on Stat-Xplore:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

As of 19 May 2020, the latest published statistics run up to 9 April 2020.

## ■ Universal Credit: Students

**Patrick Grady:**

**[49724]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to allow students in further and higher education to apply for Universal Credit during months when they are not in receipt of (a) grants or (b) loans from relevant awards agencies or loans companies.

**Will Quince:**

Most students in full-time education do not qualify for Universal Credit (UC) unless an exception applies.

Under covid-19 regulations, those who do not receive student finance and who would ordinarily not have entitlement to UC, such as those undertaking a part-time course which would otherwise not be considered as compatible with the requirements for them to look for and be available for work, will have entitlement to UC. The DWP Secretary of State and Chief Secretary to the Treasury have agreed to dis-apply UC and both legacy and new style JSA work preparation, work search and availability requirements and related sanctions. This will initially be for a three-month period which commenced on the 30<sup>th</sup> March. After three months, consideration will be given as to whether a further extension is required.

Students are able to access funding to support their education courses through various loans and grants, which are the responsibility of the Department for Education (DfE). Students who do not ordinarily have entitlement to UC and who receive a maintenance loan or grant through the student finance system will continue to be able to draw upon this financial support until the end of this academic year. The adequacy of student finance is a matter for DfE.

---

■ **Work Capability Assessments: Coronavirus**

**Neil Gray:**

**[48470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is her policy that (a) referrals to Work Capability Assessments continue during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) staff are processing those referrals as normal.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

From 17 March 2020 we suspended all face-to-face assessments for sickness and disability benefits for three months to protect vulnerable people (and assessment centre staff) from unnecessary risk of exposure to COVID-19. The Department continues to refer new claims for a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to our provider, CHDA. If it is not possible to complete an assessment based on the paper evidence, a WCA will be conducted, where possible, over the telephone.

We also announced that from 24 March 2020 we were suspending all new referrals for reviews and reassessments across disability benefits. However, where a claimant has reported a deterioration in their condition, we will refer them for a reassessment. Where possible we will also continue to process cases that have already been referred to our assessment provider.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[48445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people with covid-19 have been discharged from hospitals into care homes in the UK.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 May 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Helen Whately:**

Information is not available in the format requested.

The attached table shows a count of finished discharge episodes with any diagnosis of COVID-19 by discharge destination for each month in 2020 in England.

Health is a devolved matter within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the data requested is therefore unavailable.

The following codes have been used within the document:

- U07.1 – Covid-19, virus identified; and
- U07.2 – Covid-19, virus not identified

The data shows the number of completed episodes and not the number of people as some individuals may have been admitted and discharged on more than one occasion during the period.

The data is provisional and is subject to review.

**Attachments:**

1. **PQ48445-Jonathan Ashworth- Supporting data.xlsx**

### HOME OFFICE

#### ■ Home Office: Chief Scientific Advisers

**Greg Clark:**

[\[48357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many meetings she had with her Department's Chief Scientific Adviser (a) from 1 September to 30 November 2019 and (b) from 1 December 2019 to 29 February 2020.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 28 May 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Victoria Atkins:**

Ministers meet with Professor John Aston, the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser, as necessary during the process of policy development and delivery. During the periods in question, I met with him on numerous occasions.

**Ministers meet with Professor John Aston, the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser, as necessary during the process of policy development and delivery. During the periods in question, the Home Secretary met with Professor John Aston on numerous occasions.**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Reporting contingent liabilities in relation to a Government guarantee backing a previously approved £4 million borrowing facility and a new partially guaranteed borrowing facility of up to an additional £26 million for Historic Royal Palaces.**

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage (Nigel Huddleston):** [\[HCWS256\]](#)

It is normal practice, when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 for which there is no specific statutory authority, for the Minister concerned:

- To present a departmental Minute to parliament, giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances: and
- To refrain from incurring the liability until fourteen parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in the cases of special urgency.

The Departmental Minute I lay today is in respect of two matters:

Firstly, to provide the House with notice that Historic Royal Palaces' previously approved £4 million overdraft facility, whereby Government act as a guarantor, has now been called upon and thus the guarantee has been activated as a result of COVID-19.

Secondly, to provide the House with retrospective notice of a new contingent liability of up to £20.8 million created by my Department. This is in relation to a new borrowing facility of up to £26 million for Historic Royal Palaces whereby Government provides the lender with a guarantee of 80% against the outstanding balance of the finance.

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is a charity established by Royal Charter. By virtue of a contract entered into on 1 April 1998, it carries out the functions of the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under Section 21 of the Crown Lands Act 1851 of managing the unoccupied Royal Palaces.

The £4 million guarantee was originally placed in 2002 and was intended to safeguard HRP's business from a sudden and serious decline in economic conditions affecting HRP's admissions income. Since that date, the guarantee has been extended on a rolling basis. Following the laying of a Departmental Minute and Written Ministerial Statement by the then Heritage Minister on 15 September 2016, the £4 million guarantee was last renewed for a period of 5 years.

As a result of COVID-19, HRP closed all of the palaces in its care on 20 March 2020. As HRP receive no grant-in-aid from Government and are entirely dependent on admissions, visitor related spend and events, they have therefore lost their main sources of income. Whilst HRP currently have reserves of c.£33 million, the use of these reserves before they mature would not be cost effective and lead to financial penalties being incurred. The £4 million overdraft facility with Barclays Bank has therefore been put in place to

meet their immediate cash flow requirements in April and thus the £4m guarantee has been activated.

HRP expects that the current crisis will exhaust all of their reserves within the current financial year. The new guaranteed borrowing facility of up to an additional £26 million will enable HRP to allow their reserves to mature and invest in the business. The guarantee will be available for a period of two years and HRP will only enter into borrowing facilities at such times and within such monetary limits as the Department shall agree.

HRP's cash flow estimates showed that by the end of May they would have exhausted the existing £4m overdraft facility and be in urgent need of c.£1.4m to make payments due. Therefore, due to the urgency involved, the Department has authorised HRP to immediately draw down £4million from the additional £26 million facility to meet HRP's immediate cashflow needs.

I am placing today a copy of the Departmental Minute in the Library of the House.

**Attachments:**

1. [Departmental Minute](#) [Departmental minute.pdf]

## EDUCATION

### ■ Education Update

#### **The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):**

**[[HCWS258](#)]**

This week, we have been able to take the first, cautious, step towards getting children and young people back in education. In line with many other countries this is being done with a phased approach. As the Prime Minister confirmed on 28 May, the government's five tests are being met and all nations in the UK are beginning to ease the lockdown restrictions.

Based on all the evidence, in England this means that nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, are now able to welcome back children of all ages. Primary schools are able to welcome back pupils in Reception, year 1 and year 6, in smaller class sizes, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children of all ages who will continue to be able to attend.

We recognise that schools and nurseries need time to plan and to implement the strict protective measures we have asked them to put in place. We are continuing to work with the sector to ensure any schools experiencing difficulties are supported to welcome more children and young people back as soon as possible.

From 15 June, secondary schools and further education providers are being asked to provide face-to-face support for years 10 and 12, and 16-19 learners in the first year of a two-year study programme, who are due to take key exams next year. This support will supplement their remote education, which will continue to be their main method of education during this term. As the scientific evidence indicates numbers need to continue to be limited, we are asking that only a quarter of this cohort should attend at any one

time to limit the risk of transmission. Children of critical workers and vulnerable children in all year groups will continue to be able to attend full-time.

The Department for Education has published detailed guidance for settings on how to prepare.

We continue to follow the best scientific advice and believe that this cautious, phased return is the most sensible course of action to take. As the Prime Minister has set out, the Government will continue to monitor the rate of transmission carefully and will not hesitate to reintroduce restrictions on a local or regional basis if required.

I continue to be immensely grateful for the response of all those in working in education, childcare and children's social care during this challenging time.

### ■ Higher Education stabilisation package draft Regulations

**The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan):**

[\[HCWS252\]](#)

On 4 May 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced a package of measures to protect students and higher education providers, in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This package was designed to stabilise university finances, including tuition fee income resulting from admissions, and to support our world-class higher education system to continue to deliver for all students and the wider economy.

One of the measures announced was temporary student number controls (SNCs) designed to prevent recruitment by providers taking a form which would be against the interests of students and the sector, yet still allow students who want to go to university, and meet their entry requirements, to access higher education.

I announced on 4 May that SNCs would be linked to the student finance system. I can confirm that I will be laying draft Regulations before Parliament which provide that, where an SNC is exceeded in academic year 2020/21, providers in England which are subject to a tuition fee limit will have that limit reduced in the subsequent academic year. In the case of institutions in the devolved administrations which attract student loans for students from England, the maximum loan amount will be reduced in academic year 2021/22 where they exceed their SNC in academic year 2020/21.

These number controls are a response to the financial threat posed by the coronavirus pandemic. They aim to prevent large swings in the number of students between providers, with much higher levels of recruitment at some providers potentially leaving others in financial difficulty. They also aim to prevent recruitment practices which are against students' best interests because they may encourage them to accept an offer from a provider that is not best suited to their needs.

On 1 June we published a policy statement setting out the detail of the SNCs. These will allow higher education providers to recruit, without the financial consequences referred to above, full-time, undergraduate, UK/EU domiciled students (with certain exemptions) up to a set level, based on 2019/20 numbers and provider growth forecasts, and which allow additional growth of up to 5% in the next academic year.

In addition, providers can also apply for additional places, following the process set out in the policy statement. The Government will allocate an additional 10,000 places for strategically important subjects, with 5,000 of these ring-fenced for nursing, midwifery or allied health courses to support the country's vital public services.

In the event that a provider does not abide by its student number controls, the Government will address the consequences for the stability and the sustainability of the higher education sector by reducing the sums available to the provider through the student finance system in the subsequent academic year. This will be through the introduction of lower fee limits in the academic year from 1 August 2021 for providers that recruit more students than their individual SNCs. Maximum tuition fee loan amounts available to English-domiciled students starting full-time courses at institutions in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales are also reduced in the same circumstances.

The Government therefore intends to lay draft Regulations (the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Student Support) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020) before Parliament for its approval. These Regulations will amend the legislation which prescribes tuition fee limits and tuition fee loan amounts.

These SNCs are in the best interests of the financial health of the higher education sector overall, and will help to ensure we can continue to look after the best interests of students, allowing them make well-informed choices that give them the best prospects for success in their lives and careers.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ NHS Test and Trace Update

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):**

[\[HCWS255\]](#)

On 28 May the NHS Test and Trace service was introduced across England. This forms a central part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy to help as many people as possible return to life as close to normal as possible, in a way that is safe and protects our NHS and social care.

The objective of the NHS Test and Trace service is to push down and keep low the rate of reproduction (R) of COVID-19 and reduce the total number of infected people by catching cases before they spread the virus. It brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service.

The roll-out of the NHS Test and Trace service has been made possible by the rapid expansion of testing. The largest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history has been created and now has the capacity to carry out 200,000 tests a day. This includes 50 drive-through sites, more than 100 mobile testing units and 3 mega laboratories. Everyone in England is now eligible for a test if they have COVID-19 symptoms. These symptoms are: a new, continuous cough; or a high temperature; or a loss of, or change in, normal sense of smell or taste.



The NHS Test and Trace service uses a combination of 25,000 dedicated contact tracing staff, local public health experts and an online service to trace the contacts of anyone who tests positive for COVID-19. The NHS COVID-19 App, which will further extend the speed and reach of contact tracing, will be rolled out nationally in the coming weeks as part of the NHS Test and Trace service.

On 22 May we announced £300m of new funding for local authorities in England to work with NHS Test and Trace to develop local outbreak control plans. These plans will focus on identifying and containing potential outbreaks in places such as workplaces, housing complexes, care homes and schools, ensuring testing capacity is deployed effectively and helping vulnerable people who are self-isolating access essential services in their area.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus is contacted by NHS Test and Trace and asked to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members and people with whom they have been in direct contact or within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. People identified as having been in close contact with someone who has had a positive test must stay at home for 14 days, even if they do not have symptoms, to stop unknowingly spreading the virus.

Those who need to self-isolate will be informed about local support networks if they need practical, social or emotional support. They will also have access to the same financial support available to those who have to self-isolate because they or another member of their household has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19. This includes access to Statutory Sick Pay, subject to normal eligibility conditions.

The public will have a key role to play in making this service a success. They will need to report COVID-19 symptoms, book tests, help to identify recent close contacts, and self-isolate for at least 7 days if they have COVID-19, and for 14 days after they were in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if they are identified as a close contact by NHS Test and Trace.

We have put in place a comprehensive media campaign to increase public awareness of the NHS Test and Trace service, what it is, why it is important and what the public need to do. This includes TV, radio, Video on Demand, posters, digital display and social media.

We are working closely with the devolved administrations and public health agencies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure an aligned approach to testing and tracing across the United Kingdom where possible.

### ■ The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendments) (No. 3) Regulations 2020

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock):** [\[HCWS253\]](#)

On 26 March 2020, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force, imposing restrictions on people's movements and gatherings, and requiring the closure of certain retail and public premises, in the interest of public health in light of the coronavirus pandemic. A review of these Regulations must

take place at least every 21 days to ensure the restrictions remain necessary. I completed the third review as required on 28 May 2020.

Taking into account scientific advice and taking into consideration the Government's assessment against the five conditions required for change, we can proceed with some limited and cautious amendments to the Regulations to ease the restrictions as announced by the Prime Minister on 28 May 2020.

The changes coming into effect include allowing for increased social contact outdoors (both public and private places) in groups of up to 6 people from different households and opening some outdoor retail (e.g. vehicle showrooms and outdoor markets). Those from different households should continue strictly to observe social distancing guidance.

In order to provide greater clarity and certainty to the public, businesses and police, we are confirming in law what people cannot do rather than the reasons for which someone can leave the home.

The changes generally follow the principle that outdoor environments, whilst not zero-risk, have a lower risk of transmission than indoor

Additionally, to ensure that we are making future decisions about the lockdown at the right time, the maximum review period will change from 21 days to 28 days. This will allow decisions to align more closely with the period of time necessary to assess the impact of previous changes on key data feeds, including the R rate. The Government will also keep all the measures under continual review and will account to Parliament on an ongoing basis.

Publicly available Government guidance on Gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the amended Regulations. These remain strict measures, but they are measures that we must take in order to protect our NHS and to save lives.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Grenfell Update

**Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick):** [\[HCWS257\]](#)

On 30 October 2019 Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which focused on how the fire started and spread and the emergency response, concluded with the publication of the Phase 1 report. In January 2020 the Government reaffirmed the acceptance, first given on the day of publication, to accept in principle, all the recommendations that Sir Martin Moore-Bick made for central government in that report.

Six months on from the publication of the Government's response to the Phase 1 report, I would like to update Parliament on the Government's progress at turning our commitments into real and lasting change to building and fire safety.

The Grenfell fire was an unimaginable tragedy that must never be allowed to happen again. Even in these unprecedented times, the Government's commitment to

implementing the Inquiry's recommendations, as a priority, remains unchanged. As does the Government's commitment to ensuring those most affected, the bereaved and survivors – who have displayed such remarkable courage, resilience and dignity – continue to be engaged in discussions about policy development.

### **Ban on the use of combustible materials**

The Inquiry's report was clear that the use of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) rainscreen cladding and combustible insulation on the exterior of the Tower was the defining factor in the rapid spread of the fire. The Government introduced regulations in December 2018 that banned the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of specific types of new high-rise buildings. A public consultation was held between January and May 2020, to further explore and refine the scope of that ban – including a proposal to ban the use of ACM with unmodified polyethylene core and similar materials on all buildings in England. We are analysing feedback and will be publishing a response in due course.

### **Remediation**

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Home Office (HO) have identified over 450 buildings with unsafe ACM cladding, and we have worked with local authorities and fire and rescue authorities to ensure that appropriate interim safety measures are in place, while these buildings undergo remediation.

In March this year the Government announced that it will provide £1 billion to fund the removal and replacement of unsafe non-ACM cladding systems. This is in addition to the £600 million which Government has made available for remediation of the highest risk ACM cladding. The prospectus for this fund was launched last month and sets out the buildings and non-ACM cladding systems that are eligible for funding and registration is now open for potential applicants, in advance of the full application process opening by the end of July 2020. More information on the Fund Prospectus can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund>.

This fund will meet the cost of remediating unsafe non-ACM cladding systems where building owners (or other entities legally responsible for making buildings safe) are unable to do so. Government are also providing additional, specialist project management capability to building owners or managing agents to speed up the development and implementation of building plans.

### **The Fire Protection Board**

The Government has also established a Fire Protection Board, chaired by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), to provide greater assurance to central government of Fire and Rescue Service protection activity. The Board is leading a Building Risk Review Programme, supported by government funding to ensure that all high-rise residential buildings of 18m or above are inspected or reviewed by the end of 2021. We are also

using a proportion of the additional £20m secured for fire and rescue services in the recent Budget to further support an uplift in protection capability.

### **Stay Put**

At the end of last year, a joint HO and MHCLG steering group was set up to support a technical review of stay put. There are three strands to this work: an evidence review, assessing academic evidence on methods of evacuation; operational research to test evacuation strategies; and building design research. The first stage of this work has been commissioned and is underway whilst preliminary work is being carried out on the other strands.

### **Building safety**

At the heart of the Government's radical reforms to building safety is the new Building Safety Regulator, which we are establishing within the Health and Safety Executive. The Government set out plans in our response to the 'Building a Safer Future' consultation for the biggest change in building safety for a generation.

The new regulator will be responsible for implementing and enforcing a more stringent regulatory regime for higher risk buildings, as well as providing wider and stronger oversight of safety and performance across all buildings and increasing the competence of those working on building safety. This work complements the establishment of a new construction products regulatory role to strengthen national oversight and effectively enforce the new regulatory regime.

The Government will soon be publishing the draft Building Safety Bill for scrutiny before it is introduced in Parliament. This Bill will put in place this new and enhanced regulatory regimes for building safety and construction products, and ensure residents have a stronger voice.

In April, the Government published a workplan detailing the next steps for the wider review of Approved Document B, following the technical review that was started in December 2018. Research will be carried out in areas such as means of escape, compartmentation and toxicity. This work will build on the changes we have published in an update to Approved Document B last month, so that sprinklers and wayfinding signage will be provided in all new blocks of flats above 11 metres. The Government is also working with the NFCC on further tests of evacuation with a view to including guidance on provision of these systems in a later update to Approved Document B.

### **Fire Safety Bill**

The Inquiry's Phase 1 report also called for new duties on building owners and managers to share technical information with fire and rescue services and undertake regular inspections of flat entrance doors. It is our intention to take forward these recommendations for existing buildings under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 underpinned by the changes being introduced through the Fire Safety Bill.

The Fire Safety Bill, which was introduced in March and received cross-party support, clarifies that the scope of the Fire Safety Order covers external walls (including cladding and balconies) and flat entrance doors in multi-occupied residential buildings. It provides

a firm foundation upon which to bring forward secondary legislation to implement the recommendations that require further changes to the law. The Bill is a significant further step to ensure better identification and management of fire safety risks in such buildings.

It is important that the Government's response to the Inquiry's recommendations has the support of those with experience in these matters, and those most affected by them. To ensure their views inform our response, a public consultation will be issued soon setting out the Government's proposed approach to the remaining recommendations that call for legislative change.

### **Fire and Rescue Services**

Many of the recommendations within the Inquiry's Phase 1 report were directed at non-Government organisations that are equally committed to the reforms. The report was clear that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) must learn and change to restore public confidence. Our request for regular progress reports from the LFB setting out how they are translating the recommendations into action are a key part of retaining focus and momentum on the need for change.

There remains much to do, but the HO is already seeing a commitment to revised policy and procedures backed up by the use of better equipment and technology to support high-rise fire fighting and fire fighting in London more broadly. The pandemic has created many challenges, but it has not affected the LFB's commitment to implementing the Inquiry's Phase 1 recommendations.

It is important that the lessons from Grenfell are learned beyond London. This is why the NFCC is working to ensure that the Phase 1 recommendations are implemented across all fire and rescue services. The HO is working closely with the NFCC on an improvement plan to help it drive real change across the sector.

In the three years since the Grenfell Tower fire, the Government has remained steadfast in its commitment to driving forward both cultural and legislative change so that no such tragedy can ever be allowed to happen again. Through implementation of the reforms highlighted in this statement, and wider work of Government and our stakeholders, we will move from the conditions that allowed a tragedy like the fire at Grenfell Tower to occur almost three years ago, to a system which ensures developers and building owners demonstrate greater responsibility for the safety of residents and which allows local authorities and fire and rescue authorities to enforce this. The Government is firmly committed to ensuring all residents are safe in their homes, now and in the future.

## **JUSTICE**

### ■ **Prison National Framework and Probation Roadmap to Recovery**

**The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):**  
[\[HCWS259\]](#)

I am today announcing the Government's plans for how Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will start to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

I want to first pay tribute to the hard-working staff across the country who have continued to deliver essential services in spite of the virus. They have been striving tirelessly to make sure those in their care are safe and the public is protected.

The Government has introduced strong measures to save lives and protect the NHS, including reducing face-to-face interactions in both prison and probation, minimising transfers between establishments, shielding the vulnerable, quarantining new entrants to prison and making greater use of technology to enable family contact and supervise offenders in the community.

As a result of the success of these measures, we are formulating plans for how these restrictions can be cautiously rolled back over the coming weeks and months. This will happen within overarching frameworks for prisons and probation which have been published today. These decisions will be guided by public health advice and the best available data.

In prisons there will not be a simple easing of restrictions across the estate but national guidance will ensure there is consistency in decision-making by governors. That means establishments will progress at their own speed, taking full account of their specific circumstances.

We know it will not be a straightforward return to normality. As the Prime Minister has set out, the whole country now needs to prepare for an extended period of living with and managing the threat from the virus.

But over the coming weeks and months, we will restart aspects of daily prison life, such as social visits, education and work, and face-to-face probation supervision, including unpaid work and accredited programmes, with adaptations where necessary to ensure safety.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation, and only proceed once it is safe to do so. Should restrictions need to be re-imposed to ensure the safety of staff and those in our care we will not hesitate to do this.

During this time, we will continue with measures such as providing additional temporary accommodation, and making careful use of our End of Custody Temporary Release powers, to ensure we are able to manage the possibility of any future outbreaks.

## PARLIAMENTARY WORKS SPONSOR BODY

### ■ Documents required by the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019

**The Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body Spokesperson (Damian Hinds):**  
[\[HCWS254\]](#)

I wish to inform the House regarding certain documents that have been agreed by virtue of the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act 2019 ('the Act').

On 8 April the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body was established as a corporate body by section 2 of the Act with overall responsibility for the Parliamentary building works. As required by section 3 of the Act the Sponsor Body established the R&R Delivery Authority to carry out the works.

Section 4 of the Act requires the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority to enter into a programme delivery agreement (PDA) regarding the arrangements for the definition, development and delivery of the works. The PDA was approved by the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority Boards on 18 May and it will be reviewed after six months.

Section 5 of the Act requires the Sponsor Body to prepare a strategy for consulting Members of both Houses in relation to the works, which must be published by 3 June. The Sponsor Body Board approved the strategy on 23 April and the Commissions of both Houses took note of the strategy in May. The Act requires the strategy to be kept under review with subsequent versions published accordingly.

Section 6 of the Act requires the Corporate Officers of both Houses to enter into a parliamentary relationship agreement (PRA) with the Sponsor Body. The PRA sets out the arrangements for how both Houses and the Sponsor Body will work together during the works, including their respective roles and responsibilities, and what they should expect of each other across a wide range of areas. The Commissions of both Houses and the Sponsor Body Board approved the PRA in April and it will be reviewed after six months.

I have attached these documents, which are also available on the Programme website at: <https://restorationandrenewal.uk/about-us/governance>

**Attachments:**

1. [Member Consultation Strategy](#) [Member\_Consultation\_Strategy.pdf]
2. [Parliamentary Relationship Agreement](#) [Parliamentary\_Relationship\_Agreement.pdf]
3. [Programme Delivery Agreement](#) [Programme\_Delivery\_Agreement.pdf]