



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 9 June 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:51 P.M., 09 June 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Barbecues**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[51524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to prohibit the sale of single use barbecues.

Paul Scully:

All consumer products, including single use barbecues must be safe in normal or reasonably foreseeable use in line with the requirements of the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. There are no plans to ban their sale.

■ **Batteries: Sustainable Development**

Greg Smith:

[\[52539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the sustainability of sourcing rare earths for battery technology.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is aware of the socioeconomic, environmental and supply concerns surrounding the mining of raw materials for electric vehicle (EV) batteries and is taking steps to address these.

The Government has committed £274m into the Faraday Battery Challenge (FBC) to support the research, development and scale-up of world-leading battery technology in the UK.

This include research to make better use of global resources and support a more circular economy; for example, by reducing the amount of critical raw materials, such as cobalt, that are used in EV batteries, and localising more of the battery supply chain to the UK. The Faraday Institution's £10m 'ReLiB' (Reuse and Recycling of Lithium-ion Batteries) research project is developing the technological, economic and legal infrastructure to allow close to 100% of the materials in lithium-ion batteries to be reused or recycled at the end of their first life. Through the Faraday Institution, the UK participates in the Global Battery Alliance: a World Economic Forum initiative seeking to accelerate action towards a socially responsible, environmentally sustainable and innovative battery value chain.

■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2020 Question 45020 on the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, whether

businesses applying for a loan under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme are required to have had revenue in the 2019 fiscal year.

Paul Scully:

Under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) businesses can apply for a loan of up to 25% of their turnover in the calendar year 2019, from a minimum of £2000 up to a maximum of £50,000. In order to meet this criterion, businesses must have a turnover of at least £8000 from 2019.

If a business was established after 1 January 2019, the 25% limit should be applied to the estimated annual turnover from the date the business started.

The BBLS and CBILS are part of a broad package of support available for SMEs, including rates relief, grants and support for wage packages. Further detail on the support available can be found on the Government's business support website.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2020 to Question 45020 on the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, whether he has had discussions with Bounce Back Loan Scheme lenders to encourage them to support viable businesses which did not have any turnover in the 2019 fiscal year.

Paul Scully:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy regularly meets with lenders, and as part of this addresses feedback on how the Government's Coronavirus support loan schemes have been working and closely monitors their implementation. This includes regular dialogue with each of the major BBLS lenders.

The BBLS is part of a broad package of support available for SMEs, including rates relief, grants and support for wage packages. Further detail on the support available can be found on the Government's business support website.

■ **Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Fraud**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to tackle potential fraud in relation to (a) the Coronavirus Business Interruption Scheme and (b) Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

Paul Scully:

It is important that thorough due diligence is conducted by lenders as part of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS).

Individual lending decisions are fully delegated to the accredited lenders. As such, fraud checks are subject to each lender's internal policy. The robustness of these

policies is thoroughly tested before a lender can become accredited to the CBILS or the BBLs.

The banks and other financial institutions which have been accredited to lend under the CBILS or the BBLs are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and are required to comply with a number of regulations, including anti-money laundering and 'know your customer' rules, designed to combat fraud and other forms of financial crime. The majority of lenders also subscribe to the voluntary Standards of Lending Practice overseen by the independent Lending Standards Board.

■ Carbon Emissions: Coronavirus

Ian Lavery:

[\[51981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on CO2 emissions.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Covid-19 has had a significant short-term effect on emissions – for example, BEIS statistics estimate that road fuel sales between 23 March and 24 May were 43 per cent below the preceding eight weeks, and electricity consumption has also reduced. Renewables have regularly been providing more than 50% of our power. But the fundamental challenge of climate change has not changed – these reductions are likely to be short-term and the need to tackle climate change and reaching net zero remains as urgent as ever.

Many of the actions we need to take to meet our future carbon budgets can also support our recovery from Covid-19 – for example through the investments we committed to in the Budget to support carbon capture and storage, electric vehicle infrastructure, and low carbon heating.

We will be setting out further plans in key sectors such as transport, heat and buildings this year.

■ Companies: Coronavirus

Lee Anderson:

[\[55035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has bring forward legislative proposals to ban companies from profiteering during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government remains committed to tackling consumer rip-offs and bad business practices, including profiteering.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has written to firms suspected of profiteering to challenge unjustifiable price increases. To date, the CMA has written to 264 firms, accounting for over 3,100 complaints, about price rises for essential products.

The Government continues to monitor the extent of profiteering and will update the law if it is proportionate to do so.

■ Construction: Coronavirus

Sajid Javid:

[51847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support supply chains in the construction industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

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 we can support its bounce back.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced a host of measures to help businesses, including construction firms and businesses in the supply chain, to access finance. Measures include £330 billion worth of Government-backed and guaranteed loans, as well as:

- A Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which enables small businesses with a turnover of up to £45 million to access vital financial support.
- A Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, providing finance to mid-sized and larger UK businesses with a group turnover of more than £45 million.
- A Bounce Back Loans Scheme, which provides loans of up to £50,000 to benefit small businesses with a 100% Government-backed guarantee for lenders.

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>.

In addition, the construction industry has developed Site and Branch Operating Procedures for firms and merchants, as well as guidance for small firms and mineral products suppliers, regarding how construction firms can apply the Government's guidance on safer working.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Kenny MacAskill:

[53633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he will take steps to preclude employers from entering into consultations on redundancy while furloughing those staff.

Paul Scully:

Employment law continues to apply to those furloughed on the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, alongside protection rights for workers, including the existing redundancy consultation periods for employers.

An employer has a statutory duty to consult when they propose to dismiss 20 or more employees in a single establishment within a rolling 90-day period. If the employer proposes to dismiss 100 or more employees in a single establishment the minimum consultation period is 45 days.

The employer is entitled to start to furlough employees who have agreed to participate in the furlough scheme before or in parallel to conducting any collective consultation which is required, as long as consultation takes place in good time and, in any event, within the statutory minimum periods before any dismissals take effect.

Consultation must be undertaken with a view to reaching agreement, although sometimes agreement may not be possible. The consultation must seek to reach agreement on ways to avoid redundancies, or to reduce or mitigate their impact.

The requirement for a minimum period of consultation is accompanied by the need to notify my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State of potential large scale redundancies so that Government can help assist redundant staff either through payments from the National Insurance Fund, universal credit or finding alternative local job opportunities.

■ **Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Offshore Industry and Transport**

Karl Turner:

[\[51896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many successful applications have been made to the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme from (a) medium-sized and (b) large business in the (i) transport and (ii) offshore energy sectors to date; and what the value is of those applications.

Paul Scully:

As of 7 June, 244 loans have been issued under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), with a total value of £1.57 billion.

Issuing new loans is the priority for lenders and the Government. We are working with the British Business Bank, HM Treasury and the lenders on providing regular and transparent data publication going forward.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[52661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the potential number of job losses in the (a) travel sector, (b) tourism sector and (c) wider economy as a result of the Government's proposed 14 day quarantine requirement due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The 14 day quarantine policy is a matter for Home Office.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

John Spellar: [\[53292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons Oxford is the location for the new vaccine production facility; and whether other areas of the country were considered for the location of that facility.

Amanda Solloway:

The competition for the Vaccines Manufacture and Innovation Centre (VMIC) took place in 2018 as part of Wave 1 of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Medicines Manufacturing portfolio. This was an open competition call, with no limit on the number of bids. The selection criteria were defined in the competition brief and the selection was made on that basis. Two sites were shortlisted, the site in Oxfordshire and a site in the North East of England.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: ICT

Martyn Day: [\[52236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce the amount of manual processing on paper it carries out and (b) make those processes digital.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department has a case management offering, which allows staff to leverage technology to improve processes. The aim is to increase automation while reducing operational costs and manual processes. Where manual processes still exist, the Department seeks to use technology to reduce them further.

■ Directors

Sam Tarry: [\[52598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of people who are directors of limited companies in the UK.

Paul Scully:

The last published Companies House statistics show that there were a total of 6,902,173 directorships as of March 2019. Directorships are not the number of unique directors on the register, but the number of directorships appointed. Some individuals will have more than one appointment so the actual number of people who are directors will be lower than this figure.

■ Drugs: Manufacturing Industries

Robert Langan: [\[52620\]](#)

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

Amanda Solloway:

The Government continues to strongly support the vision set out in the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy to make the UK a top tier global hub for biomedical and clinical research, and medical innovation.

We recognise the importance of life sciences and medicines supply during this pandemic and the Government's recognition of this group as being key workers has ensured pharmaceutical manufacturing has continued throughout the outbreak. The Government is determined to protect lives and protect livelihoods.

Vaccine and therapeutics for Covid-19 are moving rapidly through clinical trials. Government is working closely with industry to assess UK manufacturing capability for a range of potential new vaccines. The type of capacity and the specific groups needed to take this further will be determined by the technology used to produce the vaccines and the type of vaccine produced.

We have also announced a further £93 million to accelerate the building of the new Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre so it can open in summer 2021, a year ahead of schedule.

While the centre is being built, the Government will establish a rapid deployment facility thanks to a further investment of £38m to begin manufacturing at scale from this summer.

■ Electricity Generation: Carbon Emissions**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[51531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to introduce carbon emissions limits in the capacity market.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In July 2019, the Department introduced within the Capacity Market, through the Capacity Market (Amendment) (No. 5) Rules 2019,[1] the carbon emissions limits contained in the recast "Electricity Regulation" (Regulation (EU) 2019/943. These changes ensure that new capacity, which started commercial production on, or after 4 July 2019, and which does not comply with the emission limits, cannot be awarded capacity agreements in capacity auctions held from 2020 onwards, or receive capacity payments.

The Department ran two further consultations, between 22 July 2019 and 13 September 2019[2] and between 3 February and 2 March 2020,[3] on legislative changes intended to apply these limits to capacity which existed before 4 July 2019. The Government Response to these consultations, published on 20 May 2020,[4] outlines a system for monitoring and verifying compliance with the emissions limits, as well as confirming the intention to apply the limits to existing capacity from 1 October 2024.

The Department will make the necessary changes to the Capacity Market Rules ahead of the opening of the prequalification period for the capacity auctions scheduled for early 2021.

[1]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818851/Capacity_Market_Amendment_No._5_Rules_2019.pdf

[2]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/829746/proposals-capacity-market-emissions-limits-consultation.pdf

[3]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862674/capacity-market-consultation-future-improvements.pdf

[4]

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886147/Future_improvements_emission_limits_and_coronavirus_ease_ments_-_government_response_to_consultations.pdf

■ Energy

Alan Brown:

[52167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the energy White Paper; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The energy white paper remains a high priority for BEIS. It will address how the transformation of the energy system promotes high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth across the country while ensuring energy plays its full part in delivering our target of net zero emissions by 2050. We are currently assessing the impact of Coronavirus on our strategic approach, and how this will impact our plans for publication. We will set out the way forward in due course.

■ Energy Performance Certificates

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[51526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to publish an Energy Performance Certificate action plan in 2020.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We will set out a summary of responses to Call for Evidence on Energy Performance Certificates in Buildings, alongside an action plan to enhance and strengthen the current EPC framework, later this year.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[51527]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to replace the fuel cost per square metre criteria in the banding methodology

for the Energy Performance Certificate with a criteria based on energy efficiency per square metre.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Energy Performance Certificates display both an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER), an indicator of the assumed energy cost per square metre of a home, and the Environmental Impact Rating (EIR), an indicator of the carbon dioxide emissions intensity per square metre of a home.

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) and Reduced Data SAP (RDSAP) methodologies which underpin Energy Performance Certificates for homes, and the SBEM methodology for non-domestic premises, are updated regularly in line with updates to Part L of the Building Regulations.

We will keep it under review as we develop policies and plans for decarbonising buildings and reducing fuel poverty.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[51528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made the potential effect of the rating methodology for the Energy Performance Certificate based on fuel cost on the installation of low carbon heating in rural homes.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) and Reduced Data SAP (RDSAP) methodologies which underpin Energy Performance Certificates are updated regularly in line with updates to Part L of the Building Regulations. We will keep it under review as we develop policies and plans for decarbonising buildings and reducing fuel poverty. Assessments of impact on installation of low carbon heat will be made on a policy by policy basis.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[51529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the rating methodology for the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) based on fuel cost on progress towards meeting the target in the Clean Growth Strategy for homes to be EPC band C by 2035.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We remain committed to delivering the aspiration set out in the Clean Growth Strategy for as many homes as possible to reach EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost effective and affordable.

How EPCs are used in the policy package to meet the target in the Clean Growth Strategy for homes to be EPC band C by 2035 and the consequent impacts, will continue to be tested as part of individual policy consultations. We will keep the underlying methodology for calculating EPC ratings under review as we develop policies and plans for decarbonising homes and for reducing fuel poverty.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[51530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the fuel cost EPC rating methodology on the potential to reach UK carbon budgets.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We remain committed to delivering the aspiration set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, our strategy for meeting the UK carbon budgets, for as many homes as possible to reach EPC Band C by 2035, and fuel poor homes by 2030, where practical, cost effective and affordable.

How EPCs are used in the policy package to reach UK carbon budgets and the consequent impacts, will continue to be tested as part of individual policy consultations. We will keep the underlying methodology for calculating EPC ratings under review as we develop policies and plans for decarbonising buildings and for reducing fuel poverty.

■ Environment Protection

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that UK banks and financial institutions are not involved in the financing of companies whose operations contribute to deforestation or habitat destruction in (a) Brazil and (b) other countries; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to better understanding and addressing this issue. We are working with financiers and partners to take action in a number of ways.

In 2018 BEIS, DFID and DEFRA ministers commissioned the UK's Global Resource Initiative (GRI), an independent taskforce through which over 200 leading UK companies, NGOs and financiers, on 30th March, published recommendations for how the UK can mitigate the environmental footprint of its deforestation-risk supply chains and investments. The Government is now considering these recommendations as a matter of priority

The Government's Green Finance Strategy also included an expectation that listed companies and large asset owners should, by 2022, disclose information on the climate impact of their activities in line with recommendations from the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD). The government has established a process with the relevant regulators to explore the most effective way to approach climate-related financial disclosure in the UK, and this includes considering whether it would be appropriate to make reporting mandatory

In order to help financiers and supply chains actors better understand their role in global deforestation and habitat loss, the UK directly funds and supports technological solutions to bring greater transparency to deforestation-risk investments such as the Global Canopy's Forest 500 Report and TRASE tools. We also support

efforts to find new ways of accounting for the risks and value of natural capital, which is a key focus for the Treasury's Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity

We recognise that this is a global problem which requires strong partnership with other countries. The UK has committed over £200m in climate finance to Brazil to date (2016-2021), including to support community, business and local-government-led initiatives to tackle deforestation and prevent habitat destruction. These initiatives help strengthen forest governance, increase the value of Brazil's standing forest, incubate forest friendly business models, and harness sustainable forms of private sector investment. On Friday 5th June, we announced a further £64m of support to protect tropical rainforests in Colombia against deforestation

As COP26 President we are also working with our international partners to green local and international supply chains for foodstuffs and key commodities and increase the alignment of financial flows with net-zero and the Paris Agreement objectives.

■ **Horizon Europe**

Darren Jones:

[\[52357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress the UK has made in agreeing its associate membership of Horizon Europe; and whether agreement can be reached on Horizon Europe irrespective of whether a trade deal is agreed with the EU by the end of the transition period.

Amanda Solloway:

Our negotiating approach sets out that we will consider a relationship in line with non-EU Member State participation in certain EU Programmes, including Horizon Europe, provided that this represents value for money and is in the UK's interest.

We continue to hold discussions on Programme participation with the EU, and my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Written Ministerial Statement (HCWS245) of 19 May sets out that UK and EU discussions took place across all workstreams, including EU Programmes. The Horizon Europe Programme is currently being negotiated in the EU Institutions and has not yet been finalised. The Programme must be adopted by the EU before arrangements for potential UK participation could be finalised.

In tandem with our negotiations, as a responsible government, we are also developing alternative schemes to support international research and innovation collaboration. In this, we are considering a range of measures, which include options to address immediate needs and work through to any future funding scenario.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Social Distancing**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[52540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the hospitality industry to ensure the safe resumption of their trade in line with relevant social distancing measures.

Paul Scully:

As per the announcement and publication of the Government's roadmap, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy leads on the Pubs and Restaurants Taskforce. Its engagement group was convened on May 22nd.

Venues like restaurants and pubs are naturally crowded by design and require more contact between people, which means it is more difficult to socially distance. It is the government's ambition to reopen these types of businesses as part of Step 3 of the roadmap, subject to further scientific advice and the risk assessment at the time.

The BEIS taskforce is considering how these businesses can reopen safely in line with the phasing ambitions and public health directions. We are working with the sector to develop guidance on safer ways for them to open at the earliest point at which it is safe to do so.

■ Housing: Insulation**Navendu Mishra:**[\[52587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of households affected by sub-standard or faulty cavity wall insulation paid for by Government schemes; and what support the Government will provide to those households who have been awarded compensation from those companies who have subsequently fallen into liquidation.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has not made a direct estimate of the number of households affected by sub-standards cavity wall insulation (CWI). We do know that the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA) has issued approximately 6.2 million CWI guarantees covering defects in materials and workmanship. CIGA is the largest guarantee provider for CWI, and of this 6.2 million, only 0.4% of installations have resulted in concerns being raised.

The Government recognises that faulty work has been carried out under previous energy efficiency schemes and commissioned the independent Each Home Counts review in 2015. The introduction of Trustmark in 2018 as a Government endorsed quality scheme implemented key recommendations of the review on consumer protection and standards.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which has been the main domestic energy efficiency scheme in GB since 2013, has high standards for domestic energy efficiency and since January this year it includes a requirement for all installers to be TrustMark registered.

All ECO CWI installations are required to have a 25-year guarantee which aims to protect consumers where the installer has fallen into liquidation. CIGA also offer consumers an Alternative Dispute Resolution process which is facilitated by an independent arbitrator.

The Department has published consumer guidance for householders who suspect they have received faulty cavity wall insulation. This is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cavity-wall-insulation-cwi-consumer-guide-to-issues-arising-from-installations>.

■ **Hydrogen: Technology**

Greg Smith:

[52535]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to create jobs in UK-based hydrogen technology businesses.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases. Recently, the government published its Energy Innovation Needs Assessment (EINA) for hydrogen and fuel cells which identified that in 2050 up to 15,000 jobs per annum could be created through domestic hydrogen opportunities. In order to support the development of hydrogen, unlocking jobs and growth we are:

- Investing in innovation, with up to £121m supporting a range of projects exploring and developing hydrogen across the value chain;
- Supporting hydrogen deployment through our £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Fund; and
- Developing sustainable business models to support low carbon hydrogen production at scale.

■ **Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus**

Steve McCabe:

[51571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the guidance published by the Government on 11 May 2020 which stated that workers who cannot work from home should travel to work if their workplace is open, whether employees who are clinically vulnerable have the right to request (a) reasonable adjustments to and (b) social distancing measures in their workplace during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government has stated that vulnerable people who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) need to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. Members of staff who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, as well as individuals whom they live with, should be supported by their employers as they follow the required social distancing and shielding measures.

It is critical that employers offer safe workplaces. The Government has published guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible during the coronavirus

(COVID-19) pandemic. These guides cover a range of working environments and are available at www.gov.uk/workingsafely.

This guidance does not replace health and safety or equalities legislation, it provides information to employers on how best to meet these responsibilities in the context of COVID-19.

Employees have a legal duty to make sure the workplace is safe for their employees; this includes reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities and those who are clinically vulnerable.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment for clinically vulnerable employees or those with disabilities, and no other options are suitable, they may consider using the Job Retention Scheme.

■ Insolvency

Ian Lavery:

[51978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses entered administration in (a) the UK, (b) England, (c) the North East and (d) Wansbeck constituency in each month since May 2015.

Paul Scully:

The Insolvency Service collates national data on insolvency cases.

(a)and (b): administrations in the UK and England

Insolvency data back to 2015 are held on a quarterly basis for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is not possible to identify only companies in England as the legal jurisdiction and recorded location is 'England and Wales'. Quarterly information on companies entering administration since 2015 is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/company-insolvency-statistics-releases>.

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, insolvency data have recently been compiled on a monthly basis to provide faster indicators of the impact of the pandemic on insolvency. However, this information only includes a short historical time series back to January 2019. The first monthly report was published in May 2020 and covers England and Wales, and Scotland. Monthly Northern Ireland data were not available for this release. Monthly information on companies entering administration since January 2019 is available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/monthly-insolvency-statistics>.

(c)and (d): administrations in the North East and in Wansbeck constituency

Annual data are held on enterprises entering insolvency at regional level each year between 2015 and 2017, in response to **(c)**. These statistics are available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/corporate-insolvencies-by-size-age-and-location-2015-to-2017>.

The Insolvency Service does not hold information in response to **(d)**. Breakdowns of corporate insolvency by Parliamentary constituency are not available.

■ Investors in People

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[53657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many UK (a) businesses and (b) universities are Investors in People accredited.

Amanda Solloway:

Investors in People is responsible for awarding the Investors in People standard.

Since 1 February 2017 this has been a Community Interest Company, which is not part of the Government.

■ Licensed Premises: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra:

[\[52585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to support (a) pubs, (b) licensed premises and (c) brewing industries after the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government is working with the hospitality sector to develop guidance on safe ways for pubs, licensed premises and breweries to open at the earliest point at which it is safe to do so. Meanwhile, there is a significant package of financial support currently available to businesses in the hospitality sector to help the difficulties caused by Covid-19, including:

- Grants under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHGLF), the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund for eligible businesses;
- Government-backed loans through schemes such as the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS);
- Access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to furlough workers, which will continue in its current form until 31 July and then in a more flexible form from August until 31 October;
- A business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses for the 2020 to 2021 tax year; and
- The option to defer VAT payments due between 20 March and 30 June until 31 March 2021.

We continue to keep our support measures under review and to engage with the sector.

■ Natural Gas

Alexander Stafford:

[\[52634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the future of the national gas network.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Natural gas has an important and on-going role to play into the future as we decarbonise our energy system. However, how we use natural gas will need to change in order to minimise the carbon dioxide emissions associated with burning it.

Whilst we do not yet have certainty on the future role and extent of the distribution or transmission networks, there are steps we can take in the near-term to enable a decarbonised gas pathway. .

The existing gas networks, systems and markets will be important in providing the knowledge and the building blocks for the transition to Net Zero through the introduction of low carbon gases and a potential role for Hydrogen.

■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus**Mark Pritchard:**[\[51779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when hairdressers and barbers will be able to open as part of the easing of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Paul Scully:

As stated in the Roadmap for Recovery, the Government anticipates that close proximity businesses such as hairdressers and barbers will be opened as part of Phase 3 in July, should the science confirm that it is safe to do so.

Hairdressers and other beauty businesses still remain closed in the current phase because the risk of transmission in these environments is higher due to the indoor environment and closer physical contact. This also applies to mobile hairdressers.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy leads the non-essential Retail Taskforce. Part of this taskforce is focussed on salons and non-clinical therapy. We are working with the sector to develop guidance on safer ways for them to open at the earliest point at which it is safe to do so. The guidance will be published in June.

■ Post Offices: ICT**Sammy Wilson:**[\[51790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to initiate an inquiry into Post Office Ltd's handling of the problems with the Horizon IT system.

Paul Scully:

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office, and their branches are vital to communities across the country. That is why Government takes POL's relationship with its postmasters very seriously.

Government is committed to establishing an independent review to consider whether the Post Office has learned the necessary lessons from the Horizon dispute and court

case and to provide an independent and external assessment of its work to rebuild its relationship with its postmasters.

We are continuing to make progress on the scoping of the Independent Review and on the identification of a suitable Chair. We will announce further details on this shortly.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to establish an independent judge-led inquiry into the Post Office Horizon Accounting System case.

Paul Scully:

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office, and their branches are vital to communities across the country. That is why Government takes POL's relationship with its postmasters very seriously.

Government is committed to establishing an independent review to consider whether the Post Office has learned the necessary lessons from the Horizon dispute and court case and to provide an independent and external assessment of its work to rebuild its relationship with its postmasters.

We are continuing to make progress on the scoping of the Independent Review and on the identification of a suitable Chair. We will announce further details on this shortly.

■ **Prices: Coronavirus**

Liam Byrne:

[\[51619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last met with representatives of (a) the Competition and Market Authority, (b) the retail industry and (c) online marketplaces to discuss the tackling of price gouging during the covid-19 outbreak; and how regularly he has met with those representatives to discuss that matter since the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to tackling consumer rip-offs and bad business practices, including profiteering.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State met with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), business, trade and consumer organisations on Thursday 9 April to reinforce this message. The Ministerial team has ongoing engagement with stakeholders on consumer issues arising from the Covid-19 outbreak.

■ Protective Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Daniel Zeichner:

[52051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the New High-Volume Manufacturers of COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment guide applies to voluntary manufacturers of masks, face shields and face coverings.

Paul Scully:

The Government has published two new guides to support businesses in how they can supply safe PPE, one focussed on large manufacturers and another for small producers. The Office for Product Safety and Standards has provided advice to over 300 business and is working directly with a number of small voluntary groups to assist them in understanding and meeting the requirements, including the need for third party assessment. It is also working with larger producers to see whether their approved designs could be used by small producers and community groups.

There is also separate guidance for manufacturers and makers of face coverings, not intended as Personal Protective Equipment but for general use by members of the public. All three guides can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/opss-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-business-and-local-authorities>.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers:

[51705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will bring forward legislation to remove the legal obligation of pubs to pay rent to their landlords for a period of three months due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the significant impact on pubs caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and has announced measures, included in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, to prevent landlords from using aggressive debt recovery tactics.

These measures include a temporary ban on statutory demands and winding up orders where a company cannot pay its bills due to coronavirus, to ensure they do not fall into deeper financial strain. Government is also laying secondary legislation to provide tenants with more breathing space to pay rent by temporarily preventing landlords using Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery.

However, while landlords are urged to give their tenants the breathing space needed, the Government calls on tenants to pay rent where they can afford it, or what they can, in recognition of the strains felt by commercial landlords too.

A working group has been established by the government with the commercial rental sector to develop a code which encourages fair and transparent discussions between landlords and tenants over rental payments during the coronavirus pandemic and guidance on rent arrear payments.

Damien Moore:

[\[52445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support is available to pubs affected by the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Paul Scully:

There is a significant package of financial support currently available to pubs to help with the difficulties caused by Covid-19 and the associated social distancing measures the Government has put in place. The wide range of schemes include:

- Grants under the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHGLF) and the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) for eligible businesses;
- Government-backed loans through schemes such as the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BLS), the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS);
- Access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) to furlough workers, which will continue in its current form until 31 July and then in a more flexible form from August until 31 October;
- A business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses for the 2020 to 2021 tax year; and
- The option to defer VAT payments due between 20 March and 30 June until 31 March 2021.

We continue to keep our support for pubs under review and to engage with the sector.

■ Research: Coronavirus

Chi Onwurah:

[\[51961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with UK Research and Innovation on relaxing public funding match-funding requirements to allow public funding to cover 100 per cent of the costs of public and private sector research and development during the covid-19 outbreak.

Amanda Solloway:

All sources of R&D funding are of great importance to UK R&D. Every £1 of public funding in R&D leverages around £1.40 of additional investment from the private sector. The UK is at the forefront of producing new ideas and has the capacity to translate these into social and economic benefit to the UK.

We are increasing spending on R&D investment to £22 billion per year by 2024/25. This is the biggest ever increase in public funding of R&D. We intend to develop a comprehensive R&D plan which will draw on work undertaken through the Industrial Strategy, and we will work closely with stakeholders in developing this.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with UKRI, on a range of issues, including public and private sector research and development and COVID-19.

Chi Onwurah:

[51962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support private sector funded research and development during the covid-19 pandemic.

Amanda Solloway:

In April we announced a £1.25 billion package to help ensure innovative firms in some of the most dynamic sectors of the UK economy – ranging from tech to life sciences – are protected through the COVID-19 crisis so they can continue to develop innovative new products and help power UK growth.

The Government is supporting businesses to continue research and development through this crisis. We recently announced [£750 million of investment, delivered through Innovate UK, in new measures](#) to support innovation in the country's most research-intensive businesses both during and after the coronavirus pandemic, and to support new ways of dealing with global disruption. Details on this package are available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-coronavirus-business-innovation-support-package>.

This package builds on the government's existing support for innovative, high-growth firms including the £2.5 billion British Patient Capital fund, the upcoming £200 million Life Sciences Investment Programme, internationally competitive R&D tax reliefs and our major commitments to increase public R&D spending to £22 billion by 2024-25.

■ Research: Disclosure of Information

Olivia Blake:

[55065]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department issued to organisations representing (a) security guards, (b) bus and taxi drivers and (c) chauffeurs on adaptations to their working practices during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government's approach to producing this guidance has not been split by specific business types, but by the type of work environment instead. The majority of stakeholders that we engaged with praised and backed this approach and most working environments are covered within the sets of guidance that have been published.

The Government has produced guidance for people who work in and from vehicles, including couriers, mobile workers, lorry drivers, on-site transit and work vehicles, field forces and similar which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>

We will keep the guidance under review and will consider updating it as circumstances change. We are being led by the science and we will make changes to the guidance when they are needed as determined by the science and as we learn best practices from businesses.

■ Social Distancing: Disability

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[52058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to issue guidance to service providers on how to implement reasonable adjustments to enable people who are unable to social distance due to disability to access services.

Paul Scully:

The Government took into account people with disabilities when developing the guidance. Our guidance does not replace existing employment, health and safety or equalities legislation. It provides information to employers on how best to meet these responsibilities in the context of COVID-19.

The safer workplaces guidance provides some suggestions to help employers make their workplaces COVID-19 secure for their employees, visitors and customers. We expect all businesses to approach reopening in a sensible way, taking account of the Government's guidance and discussing with neighbouring businesses and their local authorities where applicable.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[52059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance he has provided to businesses on how to make social distancing accessible for people with sight loss and other hidden disabilities.

Paul Scully:

The Government took into account people with disabilities when developing the guidance.

Our guidance does not replace existing employment, health and safety or equalities legislation. It provides information to employers on how best to meet these responsibilities in the context of COVID-19.

The safer workplaces guidance provides some suggestions to help employers make their workplaces COVID-19 secure for their employees, visitors and customers. We expect all businesses to approach reopening in a sensible way, taking account of the Government's guidance and discussing with neighbouring businesses and their local authorities where applicable.

■ Social Distancing: Visual Impairment

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[52246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance he has provided to (a) businesses and (b) service providers on making social distancing measures in place during the covid-19 outbreak accessible for blind and partially sighted people.

Paul Scully:

It is critical that employers offer safe workplaces. The Government has published guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These guides cover a range of working environments and are available at www.gov.uk/workingsafely.

This guidance does not replace health and safety or equalities legislation, it provides information to employers on how best to meet these responsibilities in the context of COVID-19.

Employees have a legal duty to make sure the workplace is safe for their employees; this includes reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities and those who are clinically vulnerable.

The safer workplaces guidance provides some suggestions to help employers make their workplaces COVID-19 secure for their employees, visitors and customers.

■ Tidal Power: Swansea Bay**Paul Maynard:**[\[51817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to his Answer of 21 May 2020 to Question 46026, what was the assumed cost of capital used in the value for money assessment into Swansea Bay tidal lagoon published on 25 June 2018.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The value for money analysis undertaken by the Department used a range of different cost of capital assumptions. This included scenarios in the lower range using hurdle rates which were comparable to those for more established renewable energy technologies, such as solar PV, onshore wind and large hydropower.

Paul Maynard:[\[51818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to review the value for money assessment into Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon in light of £200m loan from the Welsh Government.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The value for money assessment undertaken in 2018 took into consideration all potential public sector funding, including funding from the Welsh Government. The analysis concluded that the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon and proposed programme of follow on lagoons did not meet the Government's value for money criteria.

■ Tour Operators: Coronavirus**Scott Mann:**[\[52258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to help support people claim back their deposits from tour operators if in the event that overseas travel plans are affected by the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Scully:

Package travel agencies are required to comply with The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018, which protect consumers who have bought package holidays. Consumers are entitled to a refund if forced to cancel a package holiday due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, which should be issued within 14 days, depending on the nature of the contract in place. Further information on the rights and responsibilities of consumers and businesses was published on 30 April by the Competition and Markets Authority. If the CMA finds evidence that companies are failing to comply with the law, the CMA will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include taking a firm to court if it does not address its concerns.

Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre**Christian Matheson:**[\[52087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many location bids were (a) invited and (b) received prior to the awarding of the investment to develop the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre; and which sites were shortlisted for that Centre.

Amanda Solloway:

The competition for the Vaccines Manufacture and Innovation Centre (VMIC) took place in 2018 as part of Wave 1 of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Medicines Manufacturing portfolio. This was an open competition call, with no limit on the number of bids. Two sites were shortlisted, the site in Oxfordshire and a site in the North East of England.

The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre will sit within the [Harwell HealthTec Cluster](#), comprising 1,000 people across 40 organisations, it will form part of a well-established and proven life sciences community where it will grow to become a vital component of the UK's national scientific infrastructure.

Veterinary Services: Coronavirus**Munira Wilson:**[\[52524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether veterinary practices are eligible for (a) the Small Business Grants Fund and (b) the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund.

Paul Scully:

The government has announced a package of support for businesses to help with their ongoing business costs in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. This package of support includes the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF)

Businesses with a property that on the 11 March 2020 were eligible for Small Business Rate Relief Scheme or the Rural Rate Relief Scheme, will be eligible for the SBGF.

Businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) on 11 March with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the following cash grants per property via the RHLGF:

- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000.
- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

In addition, on 1 May, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced that up to £617 million is being made available to Local Authorities in England to allow them to provide discretionary grants.

This Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs but not liable for business rates or rates reliefs.

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.

Businesses already in receipt of the Small Business grant or a Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant are not eligible for this fund. Businesses who are eligible for or in receipt of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) are now eligible to apply for this scheme.

Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, these schemes should be directed to the relevant local authority. Local authorities are required to publish details of their local schemes on their websites.

For more information on the SBGF, the RHLGF and the LADGF please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses>

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Dr James Davies:

[52202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his policy is on allowing wedding venue viewings to take place during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government's approach to the road of recovery for the reopening of businesses is a phased approach. Whilst certain businesses are starting to reopen, many businesses including the hospitality sector remain closed and so should not allow physical visits. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly engages with businesses across all sectors of the economy.

■ Working Conditions: Coronavirus

Nickie Aiken:

[\[53619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the guidance published by his Department in respect of offices and contact centres, entitled Working safely during coronavirus, whether he has plans to amend that guidance to encourage staff to return to work in the event that occupiers have undertaken risk assessments and developed safe working environments and practices in line with that guidance.

Paul Scully:

We will keep the guidance under review and will consider updating it as circumstances change. We are being led by the science and we will make changes to the guidance when they are needed and as we learn best practices from businesses.

We know that every organisation is different. Employers can use the guidance to create specific plans for their business in consultation with those who are affected by their operations, including workers and contractors. Return to work plans will depend on the nature of each business, such as the sector, and the details of the workforce and operations.

■ Yolo London: Redundancy

Matthew Pennycook:

[\[52286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has received notification from Yolo London Ltd of its intention to make more than 20 employees redundant as per section 193(2) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Paul Scully:

Information provided to Government under Section 193 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 regarding proposed redundancies is commercially confidential and for the purpose of providing those facing redundancy with assistance such as training and job seeking advice. In appropriate cases, failure to notify without good cause is a criminal offence and can result in an unlimited fine.

Any information provided through this process is not in the public domain and it is open to employers to take legal action against the Secretary of State for breach of confidence if unauthorised disclosures were made. Therefore, we are unable to provide the information requested.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Ballot Papers: Visual Impairment

Martyn Day:

[\[53512\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the design of ballot papers for people with impaired vision.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has improved the design and accessibility of ballot papers and forms at elections and referendums. This involved public user-testing of the revised voting forms, including the ballot paper, poll cards and postal voting statements. The work took into account the findings in the Electoral Commission's "Making your mark" report and made improvements to forms which voters use in order to make voting as accessible as possible.

In partnership with the Royal National Institute of Blind People, the Government is taking action to further improve the support provided at the polling station to voters with sight loss. This has included the testing of a tactile audio device to allow the voter to access candidate information, and, at the 12 December General Election, encouraging Returning Officers to allow the use of smartphones with specially designed apps for reading documents and video magnifiers to help them cast their vote.

■ Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission**Cat Smith:****[52142]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission will be established.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to PQs [1274, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278 and 1279](#) on 13 January 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Caroline Lucas:****[51832]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to set up a full public inquiry into the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak with a remit to include (a) who in Government was responsible for preparedness and (b) the quality of the Government's (i) responses and (ii) decisions; if he will undertake preparatory work on that public inquiry so that public hearings can start in 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Chloe Smith:

As the Government has made clear, at some point in the future there will be an opportunity for us to look back, to reflect and to learn lessons. However, at the moment, the important thing is to focus on responding to the current situation. The Government has set out its strategic response to COVID-19 in "Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy", which is available [here](#).

Vicky Foxcroft:**[52253]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the needs of people with disabilities and long-term health conditions to inform the strategy to end the covid-19 lockdown.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government's strategy "[Our Plan to Rebuild](#)" has been informed by a wide range of analysis and scientific advice. This has included consideration of how measures have impacted groups across the population, including people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. We will continue to ensure that these groups have the support they need.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[52334\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the announcement by the Prime Minister on 26 May 2020, if he will publish the advice provided by SAGE on reopening certain non-essential shops from 15 June 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

Published material from the Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is available on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>.

Further documents will be made available as appropriate in due course.

■ Cybercrime**Martyn Day:**[\[52225\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of cyber security experts (a) required to implement the National Cyber Security Strategy and (b) currently working in the UK; and what steps the Government is taking to encourage people studying computer science to pursue careers in cyber security.

Martyn Day:[\[53531\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) people (b) businesses and (c) organisations from (i) Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency, (ii) Scotland and (iii) the UK that have received advice and support from the National Cyber Security Centre.

Penny Mordaunt:

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), supported by a £1.9 billion investment, is delivering transformational change, building new capabilities and intervening to protect the UK from cyber attacks. The NCSC works with a wide range of partners, including the devolved administrations, to provide advice and support to people, businesses, and organisations, and to raise cyber resilience across the whole of the UK.

The implementation of the National Cyber Security Strategy requires collaborative action from all sectors of the UK including government, law enforcement, industry and academia. Cyber security experts are active across all these sectors in many different roles.

The Cyber Security Sectoral Analysis 2020, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in January, estimates that there are approximately 43,000

cyber security experts working in cyber security related roles across UK cyber security firms.

We are working to address the shortage in cyber security experts and encourage computer science students, and those from other disciplines, to consider careers in cyber security. This includes inspiring and nurturing the next generation of professionals and entrepreneurs, with over 55,000 young people having participated in our Cyber Discovery and Cyber First schemes, and working with the UK Cyber Security Council to further develop cyber security as a profession.

Since its creation in 2016, the NCSC has investigated over 2,000 significant incidents and published over 200 pieces of guidance. A total of 44,400 Cyber Essential certificates have been issued across the UK, including over 2,260 in Scotland.

■ Electoral Register

Cat Smith: [\[52144\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many electoral registration officers were employed in (a) total and (b) each parliamentary constituency in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018 and (iv) 2019.

Cat Smith: [\[52145\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans she has to increase funding for local authorities to support electoral registration officers in the running of all local elections postponed until May 2021.

Chloe Smith:

The UK Government is working with the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators and Society of Local Government Chief Executives, and with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, to consider measures to support the effective delivery of all the elections now scheduled for May 2021, including registration services.

Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are appointed by individual local authorities and Valuation Joint Boards under the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Cabinet Office does not hold records of the number of EROs employed.

Martyn Day: [\[52223\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to reduce the age for eligibility to vote in elections to 16.

Martyn Day: [\[52226\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of options to introduce an automatic system of electoral registration for all eligible citizens; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [\[52227\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will introduce a process to enable people to check their electoral registration status online.

Martyn Day: [\[52228\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many eligible electors were not registered to vote at UK general elections in (a) 2015, (b) 2017 and (c) 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [\[52230\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing compulsory voting at elections.

Martyn Day: [\[52231\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of proportional voting systems; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a single transferable vote system for future UK elections.

Martyn Day: [\[52232\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making future general election days a national holiday; and what estimate he has made of the potential effect of such a step on levels of voter participation.

Martyn Day: [\[53514\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had with Ministers in the devolved Administrations on improving the level of voter registration; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [\[53516\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the cost of supporting annual electoral registration was in each of the last 10 years.

Martyn Day: [\[53521\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many UK citizens resident overseas were (a) registered to vote, (b) successfully applied for absent voting and (c) voted in the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election.

Martyn Day: [\[53522\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what was the cost to the public purse of funding to help increase the electoral registration of young people in each of the last five years.

Martyn Day: [\[53523\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of funding to increase electoral registration of young people; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [53525]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect covid-19 restrictions on voter registration levels; and if he will make a statement.

Martyn Day: [53526]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many European Union citizens resident in the UK who are registered to vote in the European Parliament elections were turned away from polling stations at the European Parliament Elections in (a) 2009, (b) 2014 and (c) 2019.

Martyn Day: [53530]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate the Government has made of the number of eligible people who are not on the electoral register in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has no plans to change the voting age, having been elected on a manifesto commitment to retain the current franchise at 18.

The Government has no plans to introduce automatic registration. The Government considers registering to vote (and voting) to be a civic duty, but does not believe it should be compulsory. With online registration, the Government has made it easier than ever for those who want to register.

The Cabinet Office does not hold information on eligible electors who are not registered to vote for an election. Numbers registered for electoral events are published by the Electoral Commission. Reports on the 2015, 2017, and 2019 General Elections have been produced by the Electoral Commission and are available online at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Some headline registration statistics by area published by the Office for National Statistics. The latest bulletin is available at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration.

The Cabinet Office has recently considered creating a live registration status check. There are technical, security and privacy issues but the Cabinet Office will continue to see whether future developments provide a feasible and cost-effective solution in coming years.

The Government believes that there is no clear evidence that voting on a national holiday would lead to an increase in turnout.

The Government was elected on a manifesto pledge to continue to support First Past the Post for parliamentary elections. The First Past the Post system is a robust and secure way of electing Members of Parliament. It ensures a clear link between elected representatives and constituents in a manner that systems of Proportional Representation may not. This ensures that MPs can represent the interests of their constituents when debating national issues.

The UK Government works closely with ministers and officials in devolved administrations on a range of issues relating to elections, including electoral registration issues. Details of discussions are not normally disclosed.

Each Electoral Registration Officer maintains a register for their own local area, including the number of overseas electors registered in their area. Information is not collated or held centrally on voting by electors. The Government does not hold data on UK citizens resident overseas who are registered to vote, who have successfully applied for absent voting, or who voted in the 2019 UK Parliamentary General Election.

Since 2013/14, the Government has provided more than £27 million to promote electoral registration and democratic engagement more widely, including among young people. For the 2019 General Election, of the 3.5 million people who registered to vote online between the day the poll was announced and the registration deadline, 66.1% were aged between 18 and 34.

The Cabinet Office is working closely with the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators and Society of Local Government Chief Executives to support local authorities to deliver their duties in line with the Government's guidance on Coronavirus. This includes working with the Electoral Commission on guidance for the 2020 canvass, which is now published on their website.

The planning and running of polls is the responsibility of Returning Officers, who are statutorily independent of local or national government. The Government does not collect data on those turned away from polls.

■ Faculty: Contracts

Justin Madders:

[54931]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Government contracts have been awarded to Faculty in 2020; and what the value of those contracts is.

Helen Hayes:

[54981]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken to ensure the protection of citizens' data and privacy under the Government's contract with Faculty.

Chloe Smith:

Details of Government contracts above £10,000, including the value of those contracts, are published on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

All Government contracts which involve the processing of personal data, must adhere to the requirements of [Procurement Policy Note – Changes to Data Protection Legislation & General Data Protection Regulation Action Note PPN 02/18](#).

■ General Election 2019**Martyn Day:** [\[52224\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of (a) the cost to the public purse of administering the 2019 General Election and (b) the amount that accrued to the public purse as a result of candidates losing their deposits at that election.

Chloe Smith:

The cost of administering the 2019 General Election will not be known until all Returning Officers' expenses claims relating to that poll have been settled.

£622,500 was accrued to the public purse as a result of 1,245 candidates losing their deposit.

■ General Election 2019: Fraud**Martyn Day:** [\[53517\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the level of (a) voter personation and (b) electoral fraud taking place at the 2019 General Election.

Chloe Smith:

This data is not held by the Cabinet Office. The Electoral Commission reports on electoral fraud.

■ Government Departments: Reviews**Martyn Day:** [\[52222\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what cross-departmental reviews his Department is undertaking; and what the extent and level of engagement is with the devolved Administrations on each of those reviews.

Chloe Smith:

Details of Government policy including external reviews are announced in the normal way. Government ministers and officials work closely with the devolved administrations on a wide range of relevant issues. In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of the process of collective agreement between departmental ministers are not normally disclosed.

■ Press: Expenditure**Ian Lavery:** [\[51983\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will (a) provide details of each (i) article and (ii) advertorial that has been sponsored by (A) the Government and (B) other bodies using public money in any paper and digital news platform and (b) publish the cost of each of those articles and advertorials from 1 January 2020 to date.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to PQ [33512](#) on 21 April 2020.

■ Public Appointments: Scotland

Martyn Day:

[\[53513\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish a list of Scottish public appointments approved by Ministers in his Department in each of the last five years.

Chloe Smith:

Public appointments to devolved bodies in Scotland are a matter for the Scottish Government.

■ Public Consultation: Campaigns and Pressure Groups

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[51894\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that orchestrated campaigns and pressure groups are not able to (a) inundate and (b) influence the findings of government consultations.

Chloe Smith:

Effective consultation exercises can contribute to better policy making, to improved delivery of public services and to Government accountability.

There is a risk that orchestrated campaigns or pressure groups could unduly influence policy making and departments ought to be aware of this when analysing consultation responses. The Cabinet Office is responsible for the Government Consultation Principles, which provide departments with guidance on conducting consultations. Analysing consultation responses is primarily a qualitative rather than a quantitative exercise, and departments will consider a range of factors in reaching policy decisions following a consultation exercise.

■ Public Service Broadcasting

Rachael Maskell:

[\[49758\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to extend payments for transmitting public service broadcasts to community broadcasters at the same level as commercial broadcasters.

Chloe Smith:

The Government is strongly supportive of the community radio sector and recognises the great value that it offers to communities across the UK.

In response to COVID-19, the Government has developed a national campaign to provide information, guidance and reassurance to the public.

The campaign utilises a wide range of channels to maximise reach and engagement and to ensure our messaging reaches as many people as possible. This includes the use of paid-for advertising on community radio. We currently work with over 35 community radio stations on a weekly basis.

■ Small Businesses: Linlithgow and East Falkirk**Martyn Day:** [\[54165\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on how many occasions the Government has paid small and medium-sized businesses more than 60 days after the invoice was received in each of the last five years.

Martyn Day: [\[54169\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many public procurement contracts were won by small and medium-sized businesses in Linlithgow and East Falkirk in the last five years.

Martyn Day: [\[54170\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of public procurement contracts have been awarded to small and medium-sized firms in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency in the last three years.

Chloe Smith:

This information is not held centrally.

We recognise that being paid promptly is often vital to SMEs to ensure their survival and growth. The government has a commitment to pay 90 per cent of valid and undisputed invoices from SMEs within 5 days and last financial year, we spent almost £2bn more than the previous year with SMEs. In its most recent published report (Q4 2019/20), Cabinet Office paid 88% of invoices in 5 days and 97% in 30 days.

■ UK Relations With EU: Health Services**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[52547\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made in negotiations with the EU on the future of reciprocal healthcare arrangements after the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK and EU have agreed to consider addressing future arrangements on social security coordination and healthcare, in the light of future movement of persons. These arrangements will be without prejudice to the rights protected by the Withdrawal Agreement. The Government will continue to update Parliament on the progress of our negotiations with the EU.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Ethnic Groups****Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[54895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many service personnel there are in (a) the Royal Navy, (b) the Army and (c) the Royal Air Force, by ethnicity.

Johnny Mercer:

The number of Service personnel, by service and ethnicity, is published in the Biannual Diversity Statistics. The information as of 1 October 2019 can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-biannual-diversity-statistics-2019>

This publication will be updated with data as of 1 April 2020 on 25 June 2020.

■ Armed Forces: Misconduct**Jamie Stone:****[52340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the criteria are for deeming a claim for damages in respect of the alleged conduct of British forces in overseas operations to be meritorious; and whether claims deemed to be unmeritorious are excluded from settlement.

Johnny Mercer:

When a claim is received it is investigated and considered on the basis of whether the Ministry of Defence has a legal liability to pay compensation and where there is such a liability, compensation is paid. This applies whatever the alleged circumstances leading to the claim.

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences**Caroline Nokes:****[51912]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to ensure (a) understanding and (b) acknowledgement of the term Military Sexual Trauma (MST) by the Ministry of Defence and Office of Veterans Affairs; and what gender-specific training is funded by the Office of Veterans Affairs to help prevent the occurrence of MST during and after military service.

Johnny Mercer:

Whilst I am aware that the term 'Medical Sexual Trauma' is used elsewhere as a means of referring to cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment which occur whilst in service, The Ministry of Defence has made no formal decision to do the same. What we have done is to make it absolutely clear that there is no place for this behaviour in the Armed Forces. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate support provided to victims, be they serving or veteran. We recognise the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual offence. Personnel who come forward can have full confidence that all allegations are thoroughly investigated; Commanding Officers must always refer any allegation of rape and sexual assault, or any other offence which may have a sexual element, to the Service Police. Anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately, up to and including imprisonment and dismissal from service.

The Armed Forces are committed to addressing the issues of sexual assault and harassment through a range of actions, including awareness campaigns and training presentations around sexual consent.

For those who have served in the Armed Forces the Government's ambition is to make the United Kingdom the best place to be a veteran anywhere in the world. This ambition extends across the diversity of the veterans' community, including those whose service has been affected by sexual violence in any form. We recognise that such experiences can have profound and enduring impacts on an individual both during their service and as a veteran. This is why it is paramount that world class support services are available, both during an individual's service and afterwards. This includes within the Ministry of Defence's own medical services, the Chains of Command of the Armed Forces and the NHS' bespoke Armed Forces clinical pathways. This Government is committed to ensuring that any veteran or their family can access the support they need, including that support which may need to be specifically tailored to individual genders; we are continuously working to identify and draw upon lessons from other countries for both our serving and veteran populations.

■ **Military Bases: Costs**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[54863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the annual costs were of the overseas bases and facilities in (a) Singapore, (b) Bahrain, (c) Diego Garcia, (d) Duqm, (e) Falklands, (f) Ascension Island, (g) BATUS, (h) Kenya (BATUK) in the last five years; and what the cost was of improving infrastructure in each such base during that time period.

James Heappey:

The figures cover a number of years and are being brought together from across the Department. I will write to the right hon. Member as soon as the data is available.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Dairy Products**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[51565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the milk and dairy products used by his Department comes from UK producers; what steps he is taking to increase that proportion; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

Information on the proportion of milk and dairy products used by the Ministry of Defence that comes from UK producers is not held.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Pay**

John McDonnell:

[\[53281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the pay (a) minimum and (b) maximum is for each civil service grade in his Department below the Senior Civil Service (i) inside and (ii) outside the London area.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-02/53281>

■ **Oman: Air Force**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[52345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Air Force personnel are on secondment to BAE Systems in Oman; and what the roles of each of those seconded personnel are.

James Heappey:

There are currently no Royal Air Force personnel on secondment to BAE Systems in Oman.

■ **UN Convention against Torture**

Jamie Stone:

[\[52341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the UK's status as a signatory to the UN Convention against Torture (UNCAT), what his policy is on the prohibition against the limitation of criminal and civil proceedings in respect of torture, as set out in General Comment No 3 2012 UNCAT.

Johnny Mercer:

The limitation longstops in the Overseas Operations Bill do not compromise our compliance with the UN Convention Against Torture as individuals are able to bring claims for six years after the alleged torture (or within six years of being diagnosed with a psychological illness as a result of the alleged torture). The statutory presumption in the Bill is compliant with the UN Convention Against Torture as it is a rebuttable presumption which leaves a prosecutor with discretion to prosecute where they consider it appropriate to do so. It is not a statute of limitation or an immunity.

■ **Warships; Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[54862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) Type 45 destroyers, (b) Type 23 frigates, (c) Royal Navy mine countermeasures vessels and (d) Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships have been maintained for scheduled or unscheduled periods in (i) the Gulf (Gulf Cooperation Council countries), (ii) South East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Australia) and (iii) South Africa in the last five years; and what the costs were of each overhaul maintenance period.

Jeremy Quin:

The information will take time to collate and I will write to the hon. Member when it is available.

■ **Waste Disposal: Applications**

Alex Sobel:

[\[55019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether fire service crews on US military bases in the UK use firefighting foam containing PFAS.

Jeremy Quin:

Firefighting foam containing Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) is not used by fire crews on the military bases made available for US use in the United Kingdom.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Arts Council England: Coronavirus**

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[53581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether financial support grants provided by the Arts Council during the covid-19 outbreak are treated as taxable income.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Arts Council always recommends that grant recipients refer to HMRC and/or an independent advisor for advice that takes full account of their personal circumstances for tax. In general, as per the agreement reached between the Inland Revenue and the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1978, which we understand still applies, it is the Arts Council's understanding that:

- Grants awarded to support people to take time out to develop and explore their artistic and cultural practice (such as those grants recently made under the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund for Individuals) should not be treated as taxable income.
- Grants awarded to support the delivery of a specific project or projects would be treated as taxable income.'

■ **Arts: Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

Kevin Brennan:

[\[51630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer an extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for freelancers in the creative industries sector.

Caroline Dinenage:

I, as well as my colleagues at the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), continue to engage with a range of departments, including HM Treasury, to

understand how we can fully support the Creative Industries, and those who work in them, during this time.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which has so far seen 2.3 million claims worth £6.8 billion, has been extended to provide more security to individuals whose livelihoods are adversely affected by coronavirus in the coming months. The scheme has improved flexibility to bring furloughed employees back part-time in July, and a new taper requiring employers to contribute modestly to furloughed salaries from August. The scheme will help many eligible freelance workers, including those in the Creative Industries, receive up to £2,500 per month in grants.

The Government is also determined to do all it can to help sectors such as the Creative Industries in their recovery. This is why I am chairing the Taskforce responsible for the recreation and leisure sectors, called the Cultural Renewal taskforce.

■ **Aviation: Coronavirus**

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of additional redundancies that will potentially occur in the leisure and hospitality sectors as a result of the Government's 14 day quarantine policy for people arriving in the UK in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

We remain in regular contact with stakeholders, including UKHospitality, UKInbound and the Association of British Travel Agents, to closely monitor COVID-19's economic impact on the leisure and hospitality sectors. No estimate has been made by my Department of the number of potential redundancies as a result of a 14 day quarantine.

We appreciate that the quarantine measures will present difficulties for these sectors. The quarantine policy will be reviewed regularly and the first review will take place in the week beginning 28 June. We are also working with the transport industry to see how we can introduce agreements with other countries when safe to do so, so we can go abroad and tourists can come here.

Leisure and hospitality businesses and workers can access the Government's economic support package. These include the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, loan schemes, as well as business rates relief and grants for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses.

■ **Camping Sites and Caravan Sites: Coronavirus**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[51657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department plans to allow campsites and caravan parks to reopen that have been closed due to the covid-19 outbreak before the end of June 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

We will look at opening forms of holiday accommodation in Step 3 of the government's recovery strategy, currently planned for 4 July at the earliest. This will be subject to the further scientific advice and the latest risk assessment at the time.

My Department has launched the Cultural Renewal Taskforce to help our sectors' businesses prepare to reopen when it is safe to do so. To inform this Taskforce, we have set up a Visitor Economy Working Group to specifically focus on the practicalities and guidelines for restarting tourism activity during the recovery period. We remain in regular contact with holiday park stakeholders as part of this group and via the Tourism Industry Emergency Response Group.

■ Charities: Insolvency**Rachael Maskell:**[\[49060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on (a) charities going into administration and (b) emergency support to prevent that situation occurring.

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.

■ Chris Bruney**Neil O'Brien:**[\[52462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he plans to take in relation to the findings of the Gambling Commission on the death of Chris Bruney.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Gambling Commission has a range of sanctions at its disposal to hold operators to account for failures. These include financial penalties and the review of both operator licences and personal management licences, as well as criminal prosecution where appropriate. As part of its recent action against PT Entertainment Services (PTES), the Commission is continuing to investigate the roles of individual licence holders and will take appropriate action if necessary.

The government and the Gambling Commission monitor on an ongoing basis whether changes to legislation or licence conditions are needed. We are looking at the issues raised by this case and any lessons to be learned.

■ Culture: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Kevin Brennan:

[\[51629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to October 2020 at the 80 per cent level for (a) theatres and (b) other cultural venues with no income from ticket sales.

Caroline Dinenage:

As confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 29 May, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been extended until the end of October 2020. The level of Government grant will be slowly tapered from August 2020 to reflect that some people will be returning to work.

DCMS continues to engage with the sector extensively in order to best understand the challenges faced. DCMS is also regularly engaging with other departments, including HMT, to ensure the needs of the cultural sector are factored into the developing economic response.

■ Cybercrime

Martyn Day:

[\[54173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many (a) small and medium-sized enterprises and (b) other businesses have signed up to the Cyber Essentials Scheme.

Matt Warman:

A total of 44,443 Cyber Essentials certificates have been awarded to organisations. The breakdown is as follows:

Micro 9,559

Small 14,423

Medium 9,068

Large 7,116

Some of the older certificates do not have an organisation size recorded, which is why the combined total above does not add up to 44,443.

Martyn Day:

[\[54180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many businesses have enrolled on the Cyber Essentials Scheme in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency.

Matt Warman:

From 2016 until the end of April 2020, 26 Cyber Essentials certificates have been awarded to businesses in the Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency. This is an estimate, as there is incomplete location data for some historical certificate entries.

A total of 44,443 certificates have been awarded to organisations across the UK.

A search function to find organisations with Cyber Essentials certificates is available at www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberessentials/search.

■ **Data Protection: Children**

Chi Onwurah: [54918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to his oral contribution of 4 June 2020, Official Report, what the maximum time period is consistent with the age appropriate design code being laid imminently.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Age Appropriate Design Code will play an important role in protecting children's personal data online. The Data Protection Act requires that the Code is laid in Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable. Ministers are taking the necessary steps to lay the Code as soon as possible.

■ **Roads: Flags**

Andrew Rosindell: [51667]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the St George's Cross is flown at the side of all major road crossings into England.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS is responsible for informing UK Government Departments of the designated days for the flying of the Union Flag throughout the year and in conjunction with FCO, No.10 and the Royal Household, informing Departments of any instructions on the half-masting of flags, any other flag instructions and silences. Guidance is sent to all UK Government Buildings and is published on GOV.UK.

There is no specific Government policy regarding the flying of flags and we are not responsible for setting protocols that determine when, where or which flags are flown in the United Kingdom. Individuals, local authorities and other organisations may fly flags, including the George's Cross, whenever they wish, subject to compliance with any local planning requirement.

■ **Science: Coronavirus**

Anneliese Dodds: [54243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the independent science centres sector.

Caroline Dinenage:

We recognise that these are extremely difficult conditions for visitor attractions such as independent science centres. These organisations educate and entertain visitors of all ages on what science is and the important discoveries over the centuries that have changed all our lives. We continue to engage with stakeholders representing

attractions such as science centre stakeholders to assess the situation and to gather intelligence on the financial impact.

Businesses and workers in the science centres sector can access the Government's comprehensive economic support package. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan scheme, VAT payment deferrals for firms and £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses.

I have established a Cultural Renewal taskforce and a specific Visitor Economy working group to prepare guidance to help visitor attractions to reopen safely.

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[54244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what plans his Department has to provide support for the independent science centres sector.

Caroline Dinenage:

We recognise that these are extremely difficult conditions for attractions such as independent science centres. These organisations educate and entertain visitors of all ages on what science is and the important discoveries over the centuries that have changed all our lives.

Businesses and workers in the independent science centres sector can access the Government's comprehensive economic support package. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan scheme, VAT payment deferrals for firms and £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses.

My Department has established a Cultural Renewal taskforce to prepare guidance to help our sector's businesses, including attractions, reopen safely. We will continue to engage with industry to assess how we can most effectively support the attractions sector through this crisis and beyond.

■ **Sports: Coronavirus**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[53641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he is holding with national sports bodies to ensure that mass participation and competitive community sport can recommence following covid-19 lockdown measures.

Nigel Huddleston:

It is vital that the sport and physical activity sector is supported to come through this difficult period and it has a crucial role in supporting the nation back into activity once the pandemic has abated and as lockdown measures start to ease.

Both I and the Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage are holding regular discussions with a range of sport and physical activity organisations to ensure that the sector is in the best possible place to support a return to physical activity and competitive sport.

On 20 May, the Government established the Cultural Renewal Taskforce which will examine the most effective and creative ways to support the reopening of the recreation and leisure sectors, with membership drawn from those sectors. The Taskforce is being supported by working groups specifically focused on individual sectors, including sport and physical. Further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/culture-secretary-announces-cultural-renewal-taskforce>.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments: Disadvantaged

Mr Virendra Sharma: [51796]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to take steps to weight the exam results of children from less affluent households that have not had access to IT equipment during the covid-19 outbreak and whose parents have not attended higher education to reflect those disadvantages.

Steve Brine: [51918]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what adjustments will be made to GCSE grade boundaries to make allowance for the fact that year 10 children will have not received their full entitlement to education due to the covid-19 outbreak when they take GCSE examinations in 2021.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [52593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what adjustments will be made to exams taken in 2021 to account for lost contact time between staff and pupils as a result of the covid-19 lockdown.

Nick Gibb:

We recognise that students who are studying GCSE, A level or equivalent courses, and are due to take exams and assessments in 2021, will have experienced disruption to their education. We are working with Ofqual and the awarding organisations to develop our approach to next year's exams and assessments in light of this.

■ Assessments: Staff

Mr Barry Sheerman: [51584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who work for examination boards are able to access support under the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (b) Self-employment Income Support Scheme.

Nick Gibb:

Examination boards are independent organisations. As such, they are responsible for deciding on payment arrangements and discussing with HMRC as appropriate. The

situation is complex given the status of different examiners, but we know that the boards are providing information and updates to those involved.

■ Childminding: Coronavirus

Damien Moore:

[52447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what further plans he has to provide additional support to child minders during the easing of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Vicky Ford:

Our guidance for early years providers details the package of support the government has put in place for workers and businesses which will benefit childcare settings, including:

- confirmation that the government will continue to pay local authorities for free early years entitlement places for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds
- the Self-employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced would be extended from 29 May. Those eligible under the SEISS will be able to claim a second and final grant in August, which will be capped at £6,570 in total
- for the self-employed (including childminders), the minimum income floor has been temporarily relaxed, meaning Universal Credit can be accessed at a rate to match statutory sick pay

The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#funding>.

Further information about the Chancellor's announcement is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-extends-self-employment-support-scheme-and-confirms-furlough-next-steps>.

Following my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister's announcement on 28 May that the government's five tests have been met, the decision was made, based on all the evidence, to ask childcare providers to welcome back all children below statutory school age from the week commencing 1 June. This includes childminders who will additionally be able to care for school aged children, up to the statutory maximum and in line with their current Ofsted registration. The department has published a planning guide to help childcare providers prepare to open their settings for all children, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june>.

■ Children and Young People: Coronavirus

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[52404]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the guidance published by his Department entitled Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the

covid-19 outbreak, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that vulnerable children and young people, including those with mental health conditions, are able to access the support set out in that guidance.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable children and young people, particularly during the current period. This is why education settings remained open for these children and local authorities are maintaining contact with them.

Vulnerable children and young people across all year groups continue to be expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. This should remain a priority for educational providers and local authorities, including as some year groups begin to return to on-site provision.

Where vulnerable children are not attending an educational setting, we have asked local authorities, schools and colleges to continue to keep in touch with them. Our new regional education care teams, comprising education and social care staff from the department and Ofsted, are working with local authorities directly to ensure their systems and processes for maintaining contact with vulnerable children are robust.

To ensure children and young people can maintain contact with a social worker, we are providing laptops and tablets to children with a social worker who do not have access to a device otherwise, either privately or through school. We are also providing 4G wireless routers to children with a social worker at secondary school in order to support them to maintain contact with their social worker and access remote education independently at home.

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 setting up 24/7 open access telephone lines for urgent mental health support for people of all ages. The department and Public Health England have provided guidance and resources to families and schools to help promote and support good mental health and wellbeing for children and young people. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

■ **Children in Care: Missing Persons**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[52029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been reported missing from care since the introduction of the covid-19 lockdown.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[52030]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to (a) local authorities, (b) foster carers, (c) children's homes and (d) semi-independent unregulated accommodation on the (i) reporting of and (ii) response to children going missing from care during the covid-19 lockdown.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[52031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been reported missing from the family home since the introduction of the covid-19 lockdown; and how many of those incidents had domestic abuse cited as a contributing factor.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[52032]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to (a) local authorities and (b) police forces on the (i) reporting of and (ii) response to children going missing from the family home during covid-19 lockdown.

Vicky Ford:

Nothing is more important to this government than children's safety and doing all we can through local authorities and their partners, to prevent children from going missing. Regrettably, sometimes children do go missing, and we must make sure they can return safely to their carers or families. Statutory safeguarding duties on local authorities are in place to underpin this, and they remain in place as strongly as ever during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The department's statutory guidance to local authorities for the care and support of children who go missing – or who are at risk of going missing – makes the government's position and expectations very clear. This statutory guidance reiterates that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on local authorities and it actively promotes effective joint working between agencies and professionals to minimise the risk of children going missing. The statutory guidance applies to all children whether in care or living with their families. If children are in care settings, the safeguarding duties on local authorities apply regardless of the setting in which the child is placed. The statutory guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>.

The data on the number of children who have been reported missing from care since the introduction of the COVID-19 lockdown is not available in the form requested. The department is currently in the process of collecting looked after children data from local authorities for the reporting year ending 31 March 2020. Information on the number of children missing from care in 2019-20 will be published later this year. Local authorities will submit information on children who have been reported missing from care after 1 April 2020 in the 2020-2021 annual return.

The latest annual figures on children missing from care were published in 'Additional tables: children looked after missing from their placement 2018 to 2019' and in the underlying data of the statistical release, 'Children Looked after in England including

adoptions 2018-19', which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

The department does not collect datasets on children reported missing who are not in care, or 'looked after' by the local authority. Individual police forces hold information about current missing persons incidents. Annual missing persons statistics, including how many children are reported missing to the police are published by the National Crime Agency's (NCA) Missing Person's Unit. The NCA intends to publish missing persons data for 2017-18 and 2018-19 later this month (June), with publication of data for 2019-20 expected at the end of 2020. The Home Office is the department that is responsible for liaising with the NCA on collection and publication of these datasets. It is important to recognise that NCA datasets are not comparable with data for looked after children that the department collects and publishes annually.

■ Children: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson:

[49846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans there are for integration of key worker children and other children when they return to school after the covid-19 lockdown measures are eased.

Nick Gibb:

As a result of the huge efforts everyone has made to adhere to strict social distancing measures, the transmission rate of COVID-19 has decreased and the Government's five tests have been met. Based on all the evidence, the Department asked primary schools to welcome back children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside priority groups (vulnerable children and children of critical 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 a range of guidance for schools and nurseries to help them prepare for wider opening, including guidance on implementing protective measures and a planning guide for primary schools. These are available on GOV.UK:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-primary-schools>

This guidance sets out a range of principles for creating small, consistent groups to lower the risk of transmission. Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are in reception, year 1 or year 6 should be included in groups with their own year group, up to a maximum size of 15 pupils. Vulnerable children and children of

critical workers in other year groups should also be split into small groups of no more than 15.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[52136]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Command Paper 239 entitled Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's Covid-19 recovery Strategy, if he will consider allowing community spaces such as church halls and community centres to offer space for groups for pre-school age children due to move to primary school in September.

Alberto Costa:

[52152]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to allow the reopening of church facilities that are routinely used as early years settings.

Vicky Ford:

From 1 June, places of worship and community centres are allowed to open for providers on the early years register which usually use those premises. Information about this can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>.

Providers should ensure they are acting in line with the protective measures and safe working guidance as well as the planning guide for early years and childcare settings. They should also ensure they are managing risks related to other users of the premises.

Guidance on protective measures and safe working guidance can be found here: <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>.

The planning guide for early years settings can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june>.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[52594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to (a) ensure that vulnerable children have access and contact with social workers during the covid-19 restrictions and (b) support teachers working in school who are the only point of contact outside the home for vulnerable children to maintain that contact.

Vicky Ford:

Our latest guidance on supporting vulnerable children is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable children and young people, particularly during the current period. This is why education settings

remained open for these children and local authorities are maintaining contact with them.

Children's social care guidance states that we expect local authorities and social workers to make judgements about visiting vulnerable children. Within the statutory framework, they should prioritise children's welfare as paramount, balancing the risks to children, the risks to families and risks to the workforce. There are many ways to keep in touch with a child, young person or family without physical face-to-face contact and it is expected that these will be utilised appropriately and proportionately in response to the risk assessment undertaken for the child on a case by case basis.

The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care>.

To ensure children and young people can maintain contact with a social worker, we are providing laptops and tablets to children with a social worker who do not have access to a device otherwise, either privately or through school. We are also providing 4G wireless routers to children with a social worker at secondary school in order to support them to maintain contact with their social worker and/or access remote education at home.

The department's safeguarding guidance sets out that a school's child protection policy should be updated to reflect the arrangements in place to keep children not physically attending safe, especially online, and how concerns about these children should be progressed. In addition, the advice sets out that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) should provide support to teachers and pastoral staff to ensure that contact is maintained with children (and their families) who are not yet returning to school. The guidance is available here:

<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>.

■ Children: Day Care

Kerry McCarthy:

[53322]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued during the covid-19 outbreak on the provision of informal childcare by (a) people who are not in the stringent social distancing category and (b) people over 70 years of age without underlying health problems.

Vicky Ford:

We have issued guidance on formal childcare which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>.

Informal childcare can be provided where the person undertaking the childcare lives as part of the same household as the parents or carers, in line with the government's

guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) for COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>.

The following government guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons should also be taken into consideration:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

Frequently asked questions have also been published on what people can and cannot do during COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>.

■ Children: Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Sarah Champion:

[52019]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the (a) Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 and (b) relaxation of regulations in respect of children in residential care on child victims of trafficking and children at risk of exploitation.

Vicky Ford:

The safety of vulnerable children remains paramount for the government during the COVID-19 outbreak which is why the vast majority of statutory duties remain unchanged. The Regulations allow some temporary and limited flexibility to be used when absolutely necessary, with oversight by senior management, and must be consistent with the overarching safeguarding and welfare duties that remain in place.

The amendments do not reduce or remove any responsibility that local authorities have towards children, nor should they be at the expense of the rights and protection of children in care. The duties on local authorities and providers to report their decision-making remains the same.

Ofsted inspections continue where there are safeguarding concerns, and new regional education and children's teams are working around the country to improve our understanding about the risks facing children and local authority and wider multiagency partners' response to those risks. We continue to work with the Home Office to protect children at risk of exploitation or trafficking.

The Regulations will expire on 25 September unless extended and we are committed to continuously reviewing them, with feedback from stakeholders, so they will remain in place only as long as they are needed.

■ Children: ICT**Rachael Maskell:**[\[52182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when local authorities will receive IT equipment for vulnerable children so that they are able to access digital learning resources during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is providing laptops and tablets to vulnerable and disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in Year 10, receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children, 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 to them so that they can learn at home.

Local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify and distribute the laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to children and young people who need them. The Department has invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers.

To date, the Department has delivered nearly 50,000 devices and 10,000 4G wireless routers to local authorities to distribute to eligible children. Deliveries will continue throughout June.

■ Environment Protection: Education**Afzal Khan:**[\[52455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2020 to Question 43160 on Environment Protection: Education, what assessment his Department has made of the extent of children's knowledge of sustainability issues.

Afzal Khan:[\[52456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to introduce standards of learning for sustainability similar to those introduced by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Nick Gibb:

It is important for young people to learn about climate change and sustainability issues. That is why both are included as part of the science and geography curricula and qualifications.

For example, in primary science pupils are taught about how environments can change as a result of human actions. In secondary science, pupils are taught about the production of carbon dioxide by human activity and the effect this has on the climate. In GCSE science pupils consider the evidence for additional anthropogenic causes of climate change.

As part of GCSE geography pupils study the causes, consequences, and responses to extreme weather conditions and natural weather hazards. In 2017, the Department also introduced a new environmental science A level. This enables students to study topics that will support their understanding of climate change and sustainability.

Schools and teachers are free to go beyond the areas set out in the National Curriculum and can deliver more in-depth teaching of the topics. The curriculum deliberately gives teachers and schools the flexibility to decide how it should be taught. Pupils' knowledge of these areas of the curriculum will be assessed through teacher and school assessment and relevant qualifications. The quality of education provided at a school, including curriculum coverage, is a central part of Ofsted's inspection framework. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications (including GCSEs and A levels), examinations and assessments in England.

Sustainability content will also be included in T levels - the new post-16 technical study programmes. When designing outline course content for the technical qualifications, the T level panels of employers and industry experts must consider sustainability where relevant to their sector. For example, in the Construction and Engineering and Manufacturing routes, T level students will be required to learn about renewable energy and emerging technologies to support energy efficiency.

■ Food Poverty: Academic Year

Rachael Maskell:

[\[49053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding he plans to allocate to tackle holiday hunger during school holidays.

Vicky Ford:

The holiday activities and food scheme is integral to our approach to provide healthy food to children over the summer. It will ensure thousands of disadvantaged children have access to healthy meals and holiday activities in summer 2020 – building on the success of the 2018 and 2019 programmes – and backed by £9 million of government funding.

In addition, the government continues to invest significantly in welfare benefits for people of working age, supporting people when they need it, including those who are out of work or on a low income. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has announced a package of temporary welfare measures. Taken together, these measures provide over £6.5 billion of additional support through the welfare system for people affected by COVID-19.

■ Foster Care: Finance

Nadia Whittome:

[\[52642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional financial support he has made available to foster carers during 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 within children's social care. We will keep this under very close review over the coming weeks and months.

The government is providing free IT devices and equipment for children who do not currently have access to these, including children living with foster carers. We have also provided a national scheme to offer supermarket vouchers, worth £15 a week, to families of children who receive benefits-related free school meals. This is to cover the cost of meals for children who are currently unable to attend school.

We are continuing to work with fostering services and sector organisations to better understand the specific challenges that foster carers are facing in order to ensure the right level of support is put in place. This includes working closely with Fosterline, an independent advice and support line funded by the Department for Education, to consider what additional support can be offered to foster families struggling at this time.

Free School Meals**Kate Osamor:**[\[52281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, who was consulted on plans to permanently extend eligibility for free schools meals to children with Zambrano carers, families receiving Section 4 support, families receiving section 17 (Children Act 1989) support and families with leave to remain under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights; whether the findings of that consultation will be published; and what steps the Government plans to take in response to that consultation.

Vicky Ford:

We have temporarily extended our eligibility for free school meals during the COVID-19 outbreak to include children of Zambrano carers, families with leave to remain under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, families receiving section 17 support who also have a no recourse to public funds condition and to families receiving section 4 support.

This extension was implemented urgently and our consultation was limited to other government departments in the time available. No formal consultation was undertaken beyond this.

Free School Meals: Blackpool**Paul Maynard:**[\[51826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2020 to Question 47237 on Free School Meals: Blackpool, what criteria his Department used to assess bids for the summer 2020 schemes.

Vicky Ford:

In October 2019, we announced £9 million for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2020 and invited organisations to bid to coordinate free holiday provision for disadvantaged children in a local authority area during the 2020 summer holidays.

All of the bids received were assessed against the criteria published in our 'Invitation to bid' which has been attached.

Each bid was then ranked according to their score and we selected the ten highest scoring bids for funding. The level of funding allocated to each successful bid was in line with the scale and nature of their proposed programme, as detailed in their respective bids.

We will publish the list of successful bidders for 2020 this month.

Attachments:

1. 51826 - Invitation to Bid
[51826_Holiday_activities_and_food_programme_invitation_to_bid_2020.doc]

■ Free School Meals: Coronavirus**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[52053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason schools with a budget surplus in the current financial year are not able to reclaim the costs of providing free school meal vouchers to eligible students where it has not been possible for them to use the National Voucher Scheme; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that policy on schools that have a budget surplus with a high number of children eligible for free school meals.

Daniel Zeichner:[\[52054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of capping the maximum amount a school is required to pay from its own in-year surplus to meet the cost of providing free school meal vouchers.

Daniel Zeichner:[\[52055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing all schools, regardless of budget, to be reimbursed for providing free school meal vouchers where it has not been possible for those schools to use the National Voucher Scheme.

Vicky Ford:

Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year, as usual. We are providing additional funding to schools, on top of their existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be met from their existing resources.

It is reasonable for taxpayers to expect that further public funding through this period is not adding to existing surpluses that are held by schools. In this context, schools are not eligible to make a claim for additional funding if they expect to be able to add

to their existing historic surpluses in their current financial year, regardless of their school context or pupil characteristics.

However, schools are eligible for reimbursement where the additional costs associated with COVID-19 would result in a school having to use historic surpluses; would increase the size of a historic deficit; or prevent the planned repayment of a historic deficit.

Where schools have exceptional circumstances, we will consider extending limits on a case by case basis. This is set out in the guidance on the fund which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>.

■ Free School Meals: Immigrants

Nadia Whittome: [52641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend eligibility for free school meals to pupils with no recourse to public funds during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

During the COVID-19 outbreak, we are temporarily extending free school meal eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds. These groups are children of Zambrano carers, children of families with a right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and children of a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. These groups are a subject to a maximum income threshold of £16,190 per annum.

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Tulip Siddiq: [54197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date the contract for Edenred to deliver the national free school meal voucher scheme in England expires; and what plans he has to (a) renew that contract and (b) find an alternative company to deliver that scheme.

Vicky Ford:

The contract with Edenred is due for review by 22 June and we are currently considering how the scheme will operate through the remaining period of the summer term.

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

■ Home Education

Layla Moran:

[54239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of (a) local (b) regional and (c) national levels of participation in remote learning; and what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of remote learning.

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.

Our latest guidance on remote education during COVID-19 is set out below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

The Department is continuing to assess the impact of the potential effect of school closure on children and young people's education attainment, including on remote education. We are working closely with schools, sector organisations, international institutions and across Government to understand the risks to education attainment and wellbeing, and identify the children and young people that need help.

We are committed to ensuring that all children can continue to learn remotely in a number of ways during these very difficult circumstances, and are supporting sector-led initiatives such as the Oak National Academy. This new enterprise has been created by 40 teachers from schools across England. It will provide 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. By 24 May, over 2.3 million users had visited the Oak Academy site and over 8.6 million lessons had been accessed.

However, 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 – both online and printed resources – for children who are at home.

■ Home Education: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[53540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) schools and (b) pupils that have been given digital devices under his Department's scheme to support remote learning during the covid-19 outbreak in (i) London and (ii) England.

Helen Hayes:

[53541]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of households who have been given an internet connection under his Department's scheme to support remote learning during the covid-19 outbreak in (a) London and (b) England.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is providing over 200,000 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. The Department has purchased over 50,000 4G wireless routers.

Computer devices have been allocated to local authorities and academy trusts based on the Department's estimates of the number of disadvantaged and vulnerable children that do not have access to a device. The Department invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers. Devices are being delivered to local authorities daily and will continue to be distributed throughout June.

Alongside the 4G wireless routers, to support disadvantaged households who rely on a mobile internet connection, the Department is working with major telecoms companies to help ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable families can access free additional data while COVID-19 requires children to learn from home. This is in addition to the support from broadband providers that the Government has already announced for those with fixed cap broadband or who run into arrears with their broadband payments.

Helen Hayes:[\[53542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) completed, (b) in-progress and (c) refused requests for devices and broadband under his Department's scheme to support remote learning during the covid-19 outbreak to date.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has committed over £100 million to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in England to access remote education and social care services, including by providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless 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 children in Year 10 do not have internet connections, we are providing 4G wireless routers.

The Department has ordered over 200,000 laptops and tablets and allocated devices to local authorities and academy trusts based on its estimates of the number of disadvantaged and vulnerable children that do not have access to a device. Local authorities and schools are best placed to identify those children that need support through this scheme. Where local authorities and academy trusts have identified a need greater than their initial allocation, the Department has been working with them to provide additional devices. Requests for devices for eligible children are not refused.

The Department invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers. Devices are being delivered to local authorities daily and will continue to be distributed throughout June.

■ Languages: Education

Julian Sturdy: [\[51922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils at key stage four were studying a foreign language in 2010.

Julian Sturdy: [\[51923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils at key stage five were studying a foreign language in 2010.

Nick Gibb:

The percentage of pupils[1] at the end of key stage 4 entering a modern foreign language[2] in state-funded schools[3] in England for 2009/10 was 42.6%. The percentage of pupils between the ages 16-18 eligible for reporting in performance tables, who entered A level exams a modern foreign language in state-funded schools and colleges[4] in England at the end of key stage 5 for 2009/10 was 7.5%.[5]

[1] Includes attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

[2] For key stage 4 entries are those counted as part of the language element in the English Baccalaureate. For key stage 5, A level languages include: French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Polish, Russian, Other.

[3] State-funded schools include academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education colleges with provision for 14 to 16 year-olds and state-funded special schools. They exclude independent schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision. Alternative provision includes academy and free school alternative provision.

[4] Covers all state-funded mainstream schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges, state-funded special schools and FE sector colleges. Excludes pupil referral units, alternative provision, hospital schools, non-maintained special schools, other government department funded colleges, independent schools, independent special schools and independent schools approved to take pupils with special educational needs.

[5] Comparisons over time should be treated with caution due to issues such as changes in methodology over time, and subject reform.

■ National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[51807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help increase student numbers at the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[51810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of for what reason there are only three students from Birmingham Ladywood constituency enrolled at the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure that is located in that constituency.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department for Education is working closely with the Department for Transport and High Speed 2 (HS2) Ltd to encourage more learners to take up opportunities to gain key skills needed across the transport and infrastructure sectors. As a National College, it is expected that students will not just be located in the local constituency but will have a different travel to learn pattern given their specialist national higher level skills offer.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[51808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure improve management structures and student outcomes following that college's inspection in November 2019.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[51811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve the financial sustainability of (a) the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and (b) other employer-led further education colleges.

Gillian Keegan:

The department has accepted the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) recommendation that a Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) was the most appropriate way forward to safeguard the strategically important provision and ensure its financial sustainability. The conclusion of the SPA is expected in late summer, when a proposal and the cost of maintaining the provision will be considered. In the interim, the department is supporting the corporation in its efforts to improve the outcomes for learners. Our other employer-led further education colleges, in the form of Institutes of Technology, have recently become operational and are currently financially sustainable.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[51809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress has been made towards creating new employer-led further education institutions throughout the UK similar to the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

Gillian Keegan:

Institutes of Technology (IoTs) are employer-led further education institutions focussing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. IoTs are a different model to National Colleges as they are a collaboration bringing together existing further education providers with higher education institutions and employers, to lead delivery of higher-level technical STEM skills to drive future economic growth operating across England at a sub-regional scale.

Eight IoTs are already operational with a further 4 approved:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/institutes-of-technology--2>. A second competition for additional IoTs is to be launched later this year. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/institutes-of-technology-wave-2-competition-prospectus>.

■ Overseas Students: Coronavirus**Neil Coyle:****[52043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support specialist higher education providers that are financially reliant on international student fee income and who have incurred losses as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Neil Coyle:**[52044]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support higher education providers that are financially reliant on international student fee income and who have incurred losses as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak will have an unparalleled impact on all elements of the global and UK economy. The higher education sector, including student recruitment, is no exception. We have been working closely with the sector, including specialist providers, to monitor the likely impacts of COVID-19 on student numbers in 2020-21. We understand the COVID-19 outbreak and a possible reduction in overall student numbers poses significant challenges.

In response to this and calls from the sector, on 4 May, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a package of measures to stabilise university admissions this autumn and ensure sustainability in higher education at a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

Temporary student number controls will be put in place for domestic and EU students for the academic year 2020/21 to ensure a fair, structured distribution of students across providers. Provider-level student number controls will be determined based on provider forecasts and allow for 5% growth above this. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, will also have the discretion to allocate an additional 10,000 places on top of the controls, of which 5,000 will be allocated to students studying nursing or allied health courses, to ensure growing numbers that will support our vital public services. This measure will only apply to full-time undergraduate

UK/EU domiciled students, with certain specified exemptions. These controls will not apply to international (non-EU) students.

The Office for Students (OfS), the regulator in England, has also consulted on a new temporary condition of registration. The OfS' proposed condition would prohibit registered providers from engaging in any form of conduct which, in the opinion of the OfS, could reasonably have a material negative effect on the stability and/or integrity of the English higher education sector.

The government has also pulled forward tuition fee payments, expected to be worth £2.6 billion, for providers so that they receive more cash in the first term of academic year 2020/21, announced £100 million of public funding will be brought forward to the current academic year to help protect vital university research activities in England and confirmed providers are eligible to apply for the government financial support schemes estimated by the OfS to be worth at least £700 million to the sector.

Universities have an integral part to play in our economy, society and culture, which is highlighted now more than ever through their leading role in the fight against the virus. That is why we are introducing a package of measures to boost support for students, stabilise the admissions system and ease the pressures on universities' finances.

I have written to all hon. Members with full details of the package, which have also been published on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-package-for-universities-and-students>.

On Friday 5 June, the department announced Sir Steve Smith as the International Education Champion, a key deliverable of the 2019 International Education Strategy. Sir Steve will assist with opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector, tackling international challenges such as those posed to attracting international students and forging lasting global connections.

■ Physical Education and Pupil Premium: Finance

Darren Jones:

[52356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) pupil premium funding and (b) physical education and sport funding for schools will be (i) maintained at the level and (ii) paid on the dates agreed prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The pupil premium for financial year 2020-2021 will be paid using the per pupil rates and on the dates set out in the conditions of grant published in February 2020 on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

Primary PE and sport premium payments were made to local authorities for their maintained schools in April 2020 and to academies in May 2020 on the dates and at the level announced in October 2019 on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-conditions-of-grant-2019-to-2020>.

■ Pupil Referral Units: Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[49110]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that there is adequate (a) funding for, (b) support for and (c) co-operation between itself and pupil referral units to ensure that those units are able to fulfil their functions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

I have set up an alternative provision stakeholder group, formed of senior leaders from across the sector, to help us understand and respond to the specific challenges facing alternative provision schools at this time. I meet this group every month.

The support available to the sector is set out in the department's guidance on vulnerable children and young people:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>.

Alternative provision schools can claim up to £50,000 to cover additional costs, and local authorities and schools should continue to fund commissioned places in alternative provision until the end of the summer term. This is set out in the department's financial support guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>.

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

■ Rents: Students

Thangam Debbonaire:

[52131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to provide (a) financial and (b) other support to students who have lost income and are struggling to pay their rent during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

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

Government guidance makes clear how important it is that institutions operate a non-eviction policy, so that no student is required to leave halls if their contract is up, if their rental agreement does not cover holiday periods or if they are unable to pay

their rent. This is particularly important in the case of international students, care leavers and students estranged from their families.

Students will continue to receive scheduled payments of loans towards their living costs for the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year.

We have worked closely with the Office for Students to enable higher education providers to draw on existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. As a result, providers will be able to use the funding worth around £23 million per month for June and July, towards student hardship funds.

Students with a part-time employment contract should speak to their employer about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>), which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment. We have also asked that higher education providers pay particular attention to the additional financial hardships that are being faced by student staff who have been reliant on income from campus-based jobs at this time.

■ School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[51723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme will be re-instated (a) when children return to school, and (b) for the September 2020 term.

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>.

It was announced on 18 March that as of 20 March all schools in England would remain open only for a very limited number of pupils (children of key workers and vulnerable children), until further notice. Primary schools were asked to plan to welcome back nursery, reception and year 1 pupils as of 1 June 2020.

A decision was taken in March that the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme would not operate for the whole of the period which would have been the Summer term of 2020, recognising the substantial operational difficulties which would need to be resolved in order to restart such a large, national scheme part-way through a term.

At present it is not known how events may develop and so we are not yet in a position to confirm whether or not the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme will operate in the Autumn term.

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

■ **Schools: Coronavirus**

Mark Pritchard:

[51767]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has held with Public Health England on the need for personal protective equipment provision for teaching staff at schools in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) and stakeholders on our approach and guidance throughout the Department's COVID-19 response. We have worked with PHE 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. This includes measures such as ensuring that anyone with symptoms does not attend their education settings, cleaning hands regularly, good respiratory hygiene, regular cleaning of touched surfaces, minimising contact and mixing and, where needed, use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The majority of staff in schools and nurseries 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 meters from others. Our guidance sets out clearly the limited circumstances in which PPE is required in educational settings, which 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>.

Daniel Zeichner:

[52060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether additional funding will be allocated to schools to implement measures to help prevent the transmission of covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has published guidance on the additional funding we are providing to schools 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 operating as they need to at this challenging time.

The cost categories covered by the fund are clearly set out in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>.

These are increased premises related costs of opening over school holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not in school, where schools are

not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs relating to cases or suspected cases of coronavirus, above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements.

Stuart Anderson:

[52494]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that (a) vulnerable pupils and (b) pupils living with vulnerable relatives are supported when schools re-open following covid-19 lockdown measures.

Vicky Ford:

Keeping people safe continues to be the government's main priority. We have been clear that the wider opening of schools must be done in a way that is measured, reduces risk, is guided by science, and ensures that safety remains the absolute priority. We published guidance for parents and carers to help them prepare for the opening of schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June.

The guidance is clear that children and young people who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and should not be expected to attend. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. A minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category. Children and young people who live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should only attend school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and where the child or young person is able to understand and follow those instructions. If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting. The guidance for parents and carers is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/reopening-schools-and-other-educational-settings-from-1-june#should-i-keep-my-child-at-home-if-they-have-an-underlying-health-condition-or-live-with-someone-in-a-clinically-vulnerable-group>.

■ Schools: Sanitary Protection

Stella Creasy:

[54910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have opted in to period product provision; and whether his Department has plans to extend the scheme to (a) primary schools, (b) NHS facilities and (c) public spaces.

Vicky Ford:

Through the period product scheme, state-maintained schools and 16 to 19 education organisations in England can access free period products. This includes state-maintained primary and secondary schools, including academies and free schools, state-maintained middle and all through schools, general hospital schools, special schools, academies and free schools, alternative provision organisations, including pupil referral units, and university technical colleges and studio schools.

The scheme launched in January 2020 and we continue to monitor uptake closely. We will publish further information in due course.

NHS facilities and other public spaces do not fall within the department's remit. NHS England announced in March 2019 that it will offer period products to every hospital patient who needs them, including long-term in-patients.

■ Young People: Mental Health Services

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[52405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that young people receive mental health support (a) as they return to school and (b) in the event that they are not able to return to school at the same time as their peers.

Vicky Ford:

The government remains committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people. Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. 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 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 from 1 June 2020, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

It is also included as a specific theme in the planning framework the department has issued, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020/opening-schools-for-more-children-and-young-people-initial-planning-framework-for-schools-in-england>.

We are working with the Department of Health and Social Care to put in place further specific support. This includes training for teachers, such as a new module developed with clinical experts on how to teach about mental health in health education

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>

as well advice seminars, £750k of funding to three organisations extend support and advice to schools on tackling bullying, and grants to the Education Support Partnership and Timewise to support teachers' mental health and flexible working.

Where children do not return, schools can continue to support their mental wellbeing.

Public Health England and Health Education England have developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, which is available here:

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

The department has signposted resources on supporting and promoting mental wellbeing among the list of resources to help children to learn at home. BBC Bitesize have worked with the department to provide content with substantial focus on mental health, wellbeing and pastoral care, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>.

The department is also working across government to consider what further resources and support including bereavement support might be appropriate to support children and young people during this outbreak.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[52187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which ports not in use for the purpose of the Single Epidemiological Unit the Government plans to designate as a Border Inspection Post.

Victoria Prentis:

Existing entry points for agri-food goods shall be expanded to provide for proportionate additional controls. This will build on what already happens at ports like Larne and Belfast for agri-food checks. We expect to request additional categories of commodities at Belfast Port, and to designate Larne Port for live animal imports. Checks are already currently carried out at Larne on all livestock entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain, but the existing facility does not currently have formal EU approval.

■ Agriculture: Coronavirus

Andrew Percy:

[51843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether additional support will be provided to farmers and agricultural businesses impacted by the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Coronavirus continues to represent a significant challenge to daily life and every part of the economy. The agricultural sector plays a vital role in maintaining the UK's food security and has done a fantastic job of feeding the nation during this challenging period.

The Government took a number of early emergency steps to support farmers and the wider sector. These included designating employees in the food sector as key workers and temporarily relaxing the normal rules on drivers' hours, enabling the

sector to keep supply chains running, including deliveries from farm gate to processors. The department worked closely with banks to ensure farmers have access to financial support, including the Government-backed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan scheme. We have also worked closely with the dairy and horticulture sectors to address supply chain and labour issues.

On 6 May, Defra announced a new fund to support English dairy farmers who have seen decreased demand because of the loss of the food service sector. Dairy farmers access this funding for those qualifying months, with no cap set on the number of farmers who can receive this support or on the total funding available. Eligible dairy farmers who have lost more than 25% of their income over April and May because of coronavirus disruptions will be eligible for funding of up to £10,000 each, to cover around 70% of their lost income during the qualifying months to ensure they can continue to operate and sustain production capacity without impacts on animal welfare. The Welsh Government announced the opening of a similar scheme on 12 May.

The availability of this funding followed the launch on 5 May of a joint Government and Devolved Administrations backed £1 million campaign aiming to boost milk consumption and help producers use their surplus stock. This 12-week campaign is being led by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and Dairy UK. This follows a similar ongoing campaign led by AHDB and retailers to promote the consumption of beef products.

We remain in regular contact with representatives of our food and farming sector and will continue to monitor the situation to assess and respond to emerging issues as they arise.

■ Animal Products: Trade

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[52093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2020 to Question 46697, on Animal Products: Trade, by what date the Government plans to publish its response to his Department's consultation on controls on the import and export of hunting trophies.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to her on 19 May 2020, PQ UIN 46697, which remains the current situation.

www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46697]

Wera Hobhouse:

[52320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to respond to the consultation on controls on the import and export of hunting trophies.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to the hon. Member for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow on 19 May 2020, PQ UIN 46697, which remains the current situation.

[\[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46697 \]](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46697)

■ Aquaculture: Coronavirus**Luke Pollard:****[52470]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many aquaculture businesses he estimates will receive funding from the Fisheries Response Fund; and what steps his Department will take to assess the effective of that Fund.

Victoria Prentis:

Out of 79 aquaculture businesses invited to apply to the Fisheries Response Fund, 75 have received funds. Some are not eligible while others have been asked to provide further information.

Defra and the MMO are commissioning an independent evaluation of the fund's effectiveness.

■ Dogs: Coronavirus**Mr Kevan Jones:****[51646]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to ease restrictions on dog grooming parlours in the next three weeks.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government's message to the public is clear: stay alert, control the virus and save lives. Dog grooming businesses play a key role in ensuring the welfare of the nation's pets and have been allowed to operate since advice to businesses was first published, within the strict advice on social distancing and hygiene.

The Canine and Feline Sector Group, which advises both the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England and Defra Ministers, has issued its own guidance to pet businesses, including dog groomers, on how they can continue to operate under current restrictions and in line with guidance around social distancing and hygiene:

<http://www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus/SiteAssets/SitePages/Home/29th%20May%202020%20Animal%20Business%20Guidance.pdf>

■ Dogs: Meat**Andrew Rosindell:****[51680]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a ban on the human consumption of dog meat in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare, including the welfare of dogs and cats, and we are committed to making the UK a world leader in protection of animals now we have left the EU.

The Government is appalled by the prospect of dogs and cats being consumed. However, it is already illegal to sell dog and cat meat for human consumption and the Government has seen no evidence that dog and cat meat is being sold or consumed in this country.

We are confident that our current position sends a clear message that the slaughter and consumption of dogs and cats will never be acceptable. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office raises concerns about the welfare of animals with other governments at every suitable opportunity, and we are pleased to hear that authorities in China are proposing to ban the consumption of dog and cat meat.

■ Fisheries**Theresa Villiers:****[51699]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken since 23 July 2019 to ensure that new fisheries rules coming into effect at the end of the transition period can be effectively enforced.

Victoria Prentis:

As an independent coastal state, the UK will have full responsibility over how it ensures compliance in its fisheries at the end of the transition period. As control and enforcement is a devolved matter, Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters.

In England, our robust enforcement system is delivered by several agencies working in partnership, in particular the Marine Management Organisation, the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Royal Navy. Since 23 July 2019 we have taken significant steps to ensure authorities can enforce fishing regulations through securing a sizeable increase in control and enforcement capability. This includes an increase to the number of frontline warranted officers, increased aerial surveillance and additional vessels to enhance patrolling capacity at sea.

Further details of the increase in fisheries control and enforcement capacity can be found in the answer given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh North and Leith on 7 January 2020, PQ UIN 145, and the answer given to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan on 13 February 2020, PQ UIN 14762.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-12-19/145]

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-10/14762]

■ Fisheries: Coronavirus**Luke Pollard:**[\[52467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether additional Government resources have been made available to the Marine Management Organisation to enable that organisation to assist the fishing industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Alongside the £5 million repurposed from existing funds available through the Maritime and Fisheries Fund (MFF), an additional £5 million contribution from HM Treasury was made available to support English fishing and aquaculture businesses. This formed the total £10 million financial support package made available through the Fisheries Response Fund (FRF) and Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS) delivered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The MMO reprioritised and temporarily redeployed existing colleagues to rapidly deliver payments to over 1,200 businesses under both funds.

Luke Pollard:[\[52468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what performance indicators are in place to monitor and assess the performance of his Department and its agencies in assisting the English fishing and seafood industries during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Assistance tailored specifically to the English fishing and seafood industries has been provided to during the COVID-19 outbreak through the Fisheries Response Fund and the Direct Seafood Sales Scheme.

The objectives of these interventions are to: preserve productive capacity in the seafood sector; ensure firms cope with the short-term shock caused by COVID-19; ensure that fishing, aquaculture and fish processing provide a source of protein; and allow important globalised food supply chains to continue during the outbreak.

Progress toward these objectives will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively as part of an independent evaluation, which Defra and MMO are commissioning. The evaluation will also assess the performance of Defra and the MMO, and it will be externally peer reviewed before it is published.

As of 2 June, the MMO has made 1,152 payments to the catching sector, amounting to 98% of the 1,175 fishers that have applied to the Fisheries Response Fund. Of the 79 aquaculture businesses invited to apply, 75 have received funds, which is 95% of the total.

Defra has also implemented a variety of non-legislative measures to support the fishing industry. These include new guidance and reduced registration times to support fishermen to sell directly to customers and working with Seafish to enhance the marketing of domestically caught species.

A number of schemes are available to support fisheries and aquaculture businesses and a summary can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/an-update-from-tom-mccormack-ceo-marine-management-organisation>.

■ Fishing Vessels: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[52471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) vessel owners and (b) vessels that will receive funding through the Fisheries Response Fund; and what steps his Department plans to take to assess the effectiveness of that funding support.

Victoria Prentis:

There have been 1,182 vessels identified as eligible for the Fisheries Response Fund (FRF). As of 2 June, 1,175 have applied and 1,152 payments have been made totalling £5.53 million. These payments have been made to 1,042 individuals/businesses. Businesses may claim support for each qualifying vessel they own.

Defra is in the process of commissioning an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the fund.

Anthony Mangnall:

[52501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to support fishermen who have missed out on the Fisheries Response Fund as a result of delays caused with registering boats due to new software at the Registry of Shipping and Seaman.

Victoria Prentis:

We are in the process of finalising an appeals process with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), which is responsible for delivering the scheme. The appeals process will allow those who meet the eligibility criteria but who have not been identified in the original contact period, due to data being unavailable, to contact the MMO and request their case be reviewed.

■ Food: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[51973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to promote the safety and high standards of British food to (a) the public and (b) retailers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

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

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

Supermarkets are already taking steps to promote and source British products. To support the work of the entire food chain, we are engaging with different initiatives that highlight the qualities of British food products, such as meat, dairy, and vegetables, as well as fish caught in UK waters. We are also working closely with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) as they develop consumer-facing marketing campaigns for the meat and dairy sectors. We will continue to engage with and support similar initiatives that highlight the qualities of British meat, dairy, seafood and fruit and vegetable products.

Luke Pollard: [\[52477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to monitor movements in food prices during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Pollard: [\[52478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which food products have seen the largest increases in price during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Pollard: [\[52479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to monitor variations in the availability of individual food items during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK food sector has adapted quickly to unprecedented challenges during the Covid-19 outbreak to ensure people have the food and products they need. Defra has been engaged in constant dialogue with food retailers during this time, who are providing regular information on the availability of food in stores. Retailers are working hard to mitigate any disruption to their supply chain that could impact on their costs, to keep customer prices down as far as possible. We are confident about the resilience of the UK food supply chain.

Defra continues to monitor food prices through regular ONS reporting. According to the Consumer Price Index including housing costs (CPIH), between March and April, food products that have seen the largest price increase are oils and fats by 4.5%, fish by 2.6% and vegetables by 1.6%. We are also monitoring ONS online prices experimental data which reported that the prices of a set of high-demand food products increased by 1.1% between March and May. This data represents experimental statistics that provide an early indication of prices of a limited set of products, and cannot be directly compared to official national statistics.

It is not for the UK Government to set retail food prices or to comment on day-to-day commercial decisions by retailers. However, we continue to monitor prices closely and to work with industry to promote transparency for consumers.

■ **Food: Northern Ireland**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, whether the food shipments from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will require submission of export health certificates.

Victoria Prentis:

We have always acknowledged the special status held by the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP) this will require changes to provide for agri-food checks and assurances. The NIP calls for shipments of animals and animal products to meet the EU's sanitary and phytosanitary standards. Movements of these goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland may therefore require an export health certificate, dependent on negotiations.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, when he plans to publish guidance for food retailers on the formalities to be complied with in moving food from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, which body will be responsible for carrying out physical inspections of goods and animals moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis:

We have developed Export Health Certificates (EHCs) and accompanying Notes for Guidance for exports from GB to NI in preparation for the end of the Transition period. These shall be available publicly before the end of year.

The physical inspection of goods entering Northern Ireland is devolved and the devolved competent authority is DAERA. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, the EU reserves the right to supervise these inspections.

We will inform industry later this year about actions they need to take to ensure they can continue trading after the transition period has ended.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, whether he

plans that food products consisting of a variety of ingredients will require an Export Health Certificate for each ingredient when shipped from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis:

The conditions for which composite products (such as a food product containing cheese and potato) require an EHC are outlined by the Commission. The conditions include, but are not limited to, the type of composite product and the amount of animal origin product in the composite, dependent on negotiations.

■ **Food: Trade Promotion**

Andrew Percy:

[\[51844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to open up new international markets for English produced food and drink.

Andrew Percy:

[\[51845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help assist the establishment of new international markets for English farm produce.

Victoria Prentis:

Our farmers and food producers produce world-class food and drink. We are rightly proud of our high environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards, and we have the opportunity to increase overseas demands for our fantastic products.

With regards to opening new markets, exports are an important driver of growth in the food and drink sector, allowing it to become more resilient, competitive and profitable. Defra's 'Food is GREAT' campaign is raising the profile and reputation of British food and drink overseas, by building global demand and increasing positive perceptions of the UK's food and drink products. For example, the campaign showcased British beef and English Sparkling Wine to Japanese consumers, trade and media in events coinciding with the Rugby World Cup in Japan in 2019.

In 2019, the UK also signed an agreement with Japan that opened the Japanese market to UK exports of lamb and beef for the first time in two decades. This market opening is estimated by industry to be worth £127 million in the first 5 years of access. Further UK export success in 2019 included the export of £822 million of salmon an increase of 27% from 2018, whilst in March this year we agreed the market opening of UK exports of wheat to Mexico.

With the Department for International Trade and representatives of the food and drink sector, Defra will be setting out future export ambitions for the sector. This will include the support that we offer in-market.

As set out in the Government's election manifesto, we have ambitious goals for British trade. The Government aims to have 80 per cent of UK trade with countries covered by free trade agreements within the next three years, starting with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, which will further present new routes to market for British farmers.

■ Immigrants: Finance

Dave Doogan:

[\[55032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Angus dated 28 April 2020 on the potato industry.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon Member. Defra is currently dealing with unprecedented volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. A reply to the hon. Member's correspondence is being prepared and will be sent out very shortly.

■ Livestock: Dogs

Tim Loughton:

[\[54848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many cases of attacks on livestock by dogs have been reported to police in each of the last five years; and how many of those cases have resulted in prosecutions.

Tim Loughton:

[\[54849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of livestock lost to dog attacks in each of the last five years; and what measures he is considering to tackle that matter.

Victoria Prentis:

Attacks on livestock by dogs are unacceptable and Defra works with the relevant stakeholders to find ways to prevent them. This includes advice to owners to keep their dogs under effective control. In 2018 we wrote to all police forces and local authorities to explain the powers and initiatives available to help tackle irresponsible dog ownership, including attacks on livestock.

Details on the number of cases of dogs attacking livestock that have been reported to the police would be held by each separate police force and are not collated centrally. No data are collected centrally on the number of livestock lost. The attached table provides the numbers of prosecutions and convictions in each of the last five years for England and Wales for which figures are available.

Numbers of people prosecuted/convicted for allowing a dog to worry livestock under s1 of Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953

VALUES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Prosecuted	47	47	37	25	23
Convicted	40	35	28	20	21

■ Organic Food: Northern Ireland**Theresa Villiers:****[51692]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, whether changes will be made to the arrangements for certification of produce as organic which is moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis:

As the Government has set out in the recent Command Paper on the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, we have always been clear that it makes sense to protect supply chains and that there will need to be some checks to help movements of agri-food from Great Britain (GB) into Northern Ireland (NI), supported by relevant electronic processes. This may include GB organic food producers needing to provide certificates for inspection for their goods on entry into relevant NI ports.

The process by which controls are conducted for GB-NI movements, and their frequency, will need to be discussed with the EU in the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. This will be done within the context of limiting additional controls at NI ports as far as possible. We will actively seek to simplify and minimise electronic documentary requirements where possible.

■ Supermarkets: Coronavirus**Preet Kaur Gill:****[52337]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 5 May 2020 to Question 40719 on supermarkets: coronavirus, what steps he is taking to ensure that supermarkets improve the accessibility of online shopping for people with sight loss.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has been working closely with local authorities, retailers, food businesses and charities to ensure that blind and partially sighted people have access to the food and essential goods that they need.

We have published guidance online that explains what steps people can take if they are unable to access food. This guidance has been shared with local authorities, retailers and charities to help them respond to enquiries from those seeking help. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-accessing-food-and-essential-supplies>.

Various sight loss charities are working directly with some of the major supermarkets to take forward some practical initiatives to help people with sight loss to access supermarkets.

We have secured a number of supermarket delivery slots for the dedicated use of vulnerable people who are having difficulties in securing access to food and who have no other options available to them. We are working closely with local authorities and charities to help make sure these delivery slots are made available to those who

need them most. We have built a bespoke digital service to enable local authorities and a number of charities to directly refer individuals for access to the prioritised slots.

In addition, over 600,000 people are now registered as NHS Volunteer Responders. Verified volunteer responders can receive tasks to help those in their communities, including through shopping for vulnerable people for food and essential supplies. Health and care professionals and approved charities (including Citizens Advice and Age UK) are now able to refer vulnerable individuals into the system to receive support from volunteers.

It is now possible for individuals to self-refer for assistance from the NHS Volunteer Responders if they consider themselves to be vulnerable and in need of support.

■ Tourist Attractions: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[55028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the long-term effect of the closure order due to the covid-19 outbreak on the viability of (a) zoos, (b) safari parks, (c) aquariums and (d) farm visitor attractions.

Victoria Prentis:

Officials continue to meet weekly with BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) to provide updates on the reopening position and understand the impact closure is having on zoos, safari parks, aquariums and farm visitor attractions (where these require a zoo licence). We are also taking expert advice from Defra's Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC), and engaging with some of the largest zoos to discuss additional concerns which are arising including over a longer time frame, and active consideration of these is ongoing.

Zoos are eligible to apply for a range of support schemes including the Job Retention Scheme, VAT deferral, Business Rates Relief, the Business Interruption Loan schemes, the option to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay and grant funding of up to £25,000.

In addition, the £14 million Zoos Support Fund, which was opened on 4 May to help those zoos, safari parks, aquariums and eligible farm visitor attractions in severe financial distress due to the disruption caused by COVID-19 remains open for applications until 19 July 2020.

Luke Pollard:

[55029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the arrangements are for continuing inspections by his Department of (a) zoos, (b) safari parks, (c) aquariums and (d) farm visitor attractions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981, local authorities are responsible for arranging inspections of activities that require a licence under the Act. This includes zoos, safari

parks, aquariums and farm visitor attractions (where the latter exhibit non-domesticated species of animal).

Luke Pollard:

[\[55030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what additional funding he plans to make available to help ensure the viability of (a) zoos, (b) safari parks, (c) aquariums and (d) farm visitor attractions ordered to close during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Zoos are eligible to apply for a range of support schemes including the Job Retention Scheme, VAT deferral, Business Rates Relief, the Business Interruption Loan schemes, the option to reclaim the costs of Statutory Sick Pay and grant funding of up to £25,000.

The £14 million Zoos Support Fund, which was opened on 4 May to help those zoos, safari parks, aquariums and eligible farm visitor attractions in severe financial distress due to the disruption caused by COVID-19 remains open for applications until 19 July 2020.

We are engaging with some of the largest zoos to discuss additional concerns which are arising including over a longer time frame, and active consideration of these is ongoing.

We are also continuing to engage with BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) to monitor progress and any newly arising issues; and will keep working with the industry to understand their longer-term concerns.

Luke Pollard:

[\[55031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what (a) discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (b) consultation he undertook with (i) zoos, (ii) safari parks, (ii) aquariums and (iv) farm visitor attractions before the decision was made to legally close such visitor attractions due to the covid-19 outbreak on 1 June 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The Secretary of State holds discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues. Officials meet weekly with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums to provide updates on the reopening position, including meeting them on 31 May, along with representatives of the larger charitable zoos, to discuss the Government's decision to add zoos, safari parks and aquariums to Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 1 June.

■ Veterinary Services: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[\[52188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of veterinary officials required at Border Inspection

Posts in Northern Ireland for trade from Great Britain; and how many such veterinary officials have been recruited to date.

Victoria Prentis:

This is a devolved matter so we cannot provide an answer. We are working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure the delivery of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

■ **Wines: Imports**

Tim Loughton:

[\[54850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the cost of requiring VI-1 import forms on all EU wines imported into the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

As inspections for imported wine are undertaken on a risk-based percentage, regardless of origin or import certification, no specific assessment has been made regarding additional costs of controls, although it is expected to be nil or negligible.

In 2019, the UK was the second-largest global wine importer by value and volume. Leaving the EU provides the opportunity for the UK to establish an independent wine regime tailored to its growing and vibrant domestic production while building further on the UK's current position as a global hub for the international trading of wine.

■ **Zoos: Coronavirus**

Mr David Jones:

[\[54873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects to announce that zoos will be permitted to reopen.

Victoria Prentis:

We understand the challenges faced by zoos and aquariums during these unprecedented times. We also appreciate the significant opportunities zoos can provide for the public to access well managed and controlled outdoor spaces, and the potential to improve general wellbeing.

However, the Government has taken the decision that zoos and aquariums should not yet reopen, and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 1 June, provide greater clarity and certainty on this. While each individual attraction can be made safer, it is vital that we do not move too quickly in reopening to ensure public health is protected.

We are continuing to work with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums to understand how we can reopen zoos in a safe way as soon as possible with social distancing measures in place.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE■ **Bahrain: Coronavirus**

David Linden: [\[55115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 May 2020 to Question HL3434, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policy on the veracity of statements on covid-19 in Bahrain prisons from the Bahraini National Institute for Human Rights of the 9 April 2020 Reuters article which found that prisoners in that country were subject to overcrowding, poor sanitation and lack of medical care.

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 under normal circumstances, any prisoner wishing to see a doctor is taken to the prison clinic, with referral to specialist facilities where required, but as part of the COVID-19 precautions, all medical consultations now 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.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus**

Kirsten Oswald: [\[52096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of UK nationals who remain stranded at sea as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[52097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the welfare of UK citizens who are (a) crew members and (b) passengers and who remain stranded on vessels at sea as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[52098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department is having with (a) commercial companies, (b) other relevant organisations and (c) other governments on facilitating the return home of UK nationals who remain stranded on vessels at sea as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

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 36,100 people on 173 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 39 countries and territories and supported repatriation of over 19,000 Britons from cruise ships, either by providing consular assistance, or by working with local authorities and cruise operators to allow ships to dock.

No British national passengers remain on cruise ships, but we recognise this is a worrying time for British crew on board cruise ships and other vessels around the world. It is primarily the responsibility of their employers - the cruise ship and vessel operators - to ensure the welfare and safety of their crew. The Government is in direct contact with these operators, as well as directly with many crew members and their families.

Our overseas missions are liaising closely with local authorities in an effort to facilitate disembarkation and ensure British crew can access flights home. The Government restated its commitment to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Maritime Organisation (IMO) at the start of this crisis, ensuring we lead globally on our obligations to seafarers welfare, and this is a position we intend to uphold.

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.

Amy Callaghan:

[\[52511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he made of the potential merits of using flights chartered by other European Governments to repatriate UK citizens that were stranded abroad during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Adams:

The welfare of British nationals remains our top priority, and we remain committed to ensuring that British travellers around the globe, and British nationals who are resident overseas but wish to return home to the UK, are able to do so. We have been working with European governments, both bilaterally and multilaterally, including through existing European mechanisms, to share details on the repatriation of nationals and priorities for co-ordinated lobbying on maintaining commercial routes for nationals to return. More than 3,400 British travellers have been helped home by other governments around the world including EU Member States.

■ Burkina Faso: Violence

Stephen Doughty:

[\[52015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of recent trends in the level of violence and terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso; and what steps the Government is taking to help ensure security in that region.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the ongoing reports of terrorist violence in Burkina Faso and the tragic consequences for the population. The number of displaced people due to instability continues to rise. As of April this year, over 800,000 people were recorded as displaced in Burkina Faso. The UK condemns the violence and is committed to working with all partners, including the G5 Sahel countries, to support those most in need and tackle the long-term drivers of instability in the region. In February, I attended the first meeting of the Sahel Alliance General Assembly and G5 Leaders' Summit, where I reaffirmed the UK's commitment to improved security and increased development in the Sahel.

We are also deeply concerned by reports of abuses and violations of human rights in Burkina Faso, including by armed groups and the Burkinabe security forces. We welcome the Government of Burkina Faso's commitment to investigate recent abuses and hold those responsible to account.

The UK is supporting the security response across the Sahel region, including in Burkina Faso, through non-combat assistance to the French-led counter-terrorism mission Operation BARKHANE, in the form of three CH47 chinook helicopters. The UK is committed to helping the G5 Sahel Joint Force reach full operational capability. Bilateral funding has gone towards the provision of non-lethal military equipment and support for the human rights compliance framework. The UK is also supporting Burkina Faso by providing life-saving humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis. Over £23 million of UK humanitarian aid will go to Burkina Faso between 2019 and 2021, including to help tackle food insecurity and treat acute malnutrition. We are also funding a number of programmes that help provide access to education in emergencies and support women's sexual and reproductive health.

■ Embassies: Coronavirus**Mr David Davis:****[51576]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 18 May 2020 to Questions 44961 and 44962, if he will publish the results of the communications his Department has had with British Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates on covid-19.

Nigel Adams:

FCO Ministers and officials in the UK and in Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates, constantly engage with our international partners to understand their approaches to tackling COVID-19; inform our policy-making; and agree international action in response to the crisis. The FCO does not routinely publish internal communications

■ Hong Kong: Demonstrations

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make it his policy to identify any senior members of the (a) Hong Kong Police Force and (b) governing Administration of Hong Kong who have approved and permitted breaches of the legitimate right to protest against the introduction of new national security laws so that sanctions can be implemented against them; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

We support the right to peaceful and lawful protest. As the Foreign Secretary made clear in Parliament on 2 June we have repeatedly called for the Hong Kong authorities to facilitate a robust inquiry into the police's behaviour, independent of the Hong Kong and Chinese Governments. Addressing police accountability remains essential for rebuilding trust in Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for such an inquiry with Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam at the height of the protests last year. Officials have continued to raise the issue at senior levels with the Hong Kong SAR Government since then. We have also made clear publicly that police action must be proportionate.

■ Hong Kong: Human Rights and Press Freedom

Rachael Maskell:

[\[54949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect (a) journalists and (b) human rights defenders in Hong Kong.

Nigel Adams:

We expect the Hong Kong authorities to abide by international human rights laws and practices. The UK remains committed to upholding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms underpinned by the Joint Declaration and the "One Country, Two Systems" framework set out in the Basic Law. In a call with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 8 June, the Foreign Secretary made clear that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms must be preserved in line with China's international obligations under the Joint Declaration. Officials have also raised issues of concern regularly at senior levels with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government.

In our six-monthly reports to Parliament, we have regularly highlighted the importance of freedom of the press and set out our views on specific incidents of concern. We will of course continue to do so, including in the next Six-monthly Report which the Foreign Secretary intends to publish soon.

■ Hong Kong: National Anthems and National Security

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Chinese counterpart on the proposed (a) anthem and (b) security legislation in Hong Kong.

Nigel Adams:

We are deeply concerned by China's plan to impose national security legislation on Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary has made two joint statements with international partners, and made a clear statement to Parliament on 2 June. Senior Officials have raised our concerns directly with the acting Chief Executive in Hong Kong, the Chinese Ambassador in London and the Chinese authorities in Beijing. On 8 June, the Foreign Secretary spoke to Chinese State Councillor and Minister for Foreign affairs, Wang Yi. He set out the UK's deep concern at China's proposal to impose national security law in Hong Kong, which is in conflict with the high degree of autonomy, and rights and freedoms, protected under international law by the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Chinese Government is well aware of our serious concern, and we will continue to raise this issue at senior levels with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities.

In respect of the National Anthem Law, we are clear that all laws introduced in Hong Kong must respect its high-degree of autonomy, follow the appropriate legislative scrutiny, and respect the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Joint Declaration.

■ Hong Kong: National Security**Mark Pritchard:**[\[51766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of China on that Government's introduction of new national security laws in Hong Kong.

Nigel Adams:

We are deeply concerned by China's plan to impose national security legislation on Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary has made two joint statements with international partners, and made a clear statement to Parliament on 2 June. Senior Officials have raised our concerns directly with the acting Chief Executive in Hong Kong, the Chinese Ambassador in London and the Chinese authorities in Beijing. The Chinese Government is well aware of our serious concern, and we will continue to raise this issue at senior levels with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities.

■ India: Religious Freedom**Sir George Howarth:**[\[51593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of India's designation as a country of particular concern for religious freedom violations by the US Commission for International Religious Freedom.

Nigel Adams:

India has a proud history of religious tolerance and inclusive government. The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions maintain a continuous assessment of the human rights situation across India, talking regularly to the Government of India, including about freedom of religion or belief.

Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at ministerial level. We also continue to engage Indian religious leaders of all faiths and to support Indian partners to promote interfaith relations among young people.

■ Iran: Foreign Relations

Tulip Siddiq: [\[54987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he is planning to next hold discussions with his Iranian counterpart.

James Cleverly:

We have a long-standing bilateral relationship with Iran. We continue to engage regularly with Iran at all levels, including at ministerial level, on a range of important issues. This includes discussions on human rights, our dual national cases and other bilateral matters.

■ Israeli Settlements

Neil Coyle: [\[54922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the Government plans to provide to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the event that the Government of Israel attempts to annex parts of those territories.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains committed to excellent relationships with the Palestinians and our partnership with the Palestinians is improving healthcare, education and security. As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May, we are concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. 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. The UK is committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We will continue to press Israel and the Palestinians strongly on the need to refrain from taking actions which make peace more difficult.

■ Marine Environment: Treaties

Kirsten Oswald: [\[52099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he is making on UK attendance and participation in the fourth round of the postponed Global Ocean Treaty negotiations at the UN.

James Duddridge:

The FCO and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have been closely involved in the negotiation of a new Implementing Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation

and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction - the BBNJ Agreement - as an important step forward in addressing the challenges that the ocean faces. The UK is pressing for an ambitious Agreement. It will be a key mechanism in enabling the designation of at least 30 per cent of the global ocean as Marine Protected Areas by 2030.

Unfortunately, due to the impacts of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the fourth session of the Inter-Governmental Conference, scheduled for 23 March to 3 April in New York, was postponed. The UK is supportive of re-scheduling the fourth session for the earliest possible opportunity that will enable all delegations to be present for the negotiations in New York. The precise make-up of the UK delegation will need to take into account any social distancing measures that may be in place for the re-scheduled session, but it will be a strong delegation. The UK also strongly supports intersessional work, which is vital to ensure that we maintain momentum towards the successful conclusion of these important negotiations.

■ **Morocco: Coronavirus**

Ben Lake:

[\[53575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Moroccan Ambassador on the detention of Sahrawi civilians in that country in prisons with recorded cases of covid-19.

James Cleverly:

We have regular discussions with Morocco on human rights and prison conditions. UK-Morocco engagement is currently focused on our collective efforts to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. The Moroccan authorities released over 5,000 prisoners in April as a means of reducing overcrowding and limiting the spread of Covid-19.

■ **Nigeria: Christianity**

Paul Girvan:

[\[52366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Nigerian counterpart on the continued persecution of Christians in the Kaduna region of that country.

James Duddridge:

We condemn all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria, including recently reported attacks in Kaduna State. Officials from the British High Commission in Abuja are in contact with and have visited communities in Kaduna that have experienced violence and conflict. We continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to take urgent action to protect those at risk of intercommunal violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes and meet the needs of all communities.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Wilton Park hosted a conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria' in February, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from Kaduna State. The conference

was an opportunity to discuss how government, faith-based and community organisations can build solutions to intercommunal violence in Nigeria. Participants highlighted the importance of countering inaccurate narratives which misrepresent disparate incidents as a homogenous religious conflict. Whilst religion plays a part in many clashes in Nigeria, other underlying causes are also present, including competition over land and resources and livelihoods at risk.

The Prime Minister discussed insecurity in Nigeria with President Buhari at the UK Africa Investment Summit in January. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all Nigerians.

■ Nigeria: Coronavirus

David Linden:

[\[52377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of continuing violence in Kajuru in southern Kaduna, Nigeria between the beginning of a covid-19 lockdown on 25 March 2020 and the morning of 12 May 2020.

James Duddridge:

We condemn all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria, including recently reported attacks in Kaduna State. Officials from the British High Commission in Abuja are in contact with and have visited communities in Kaduna that have experienced violence and conflict. We continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to take urgent action to protect those at risk of intercommunal violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes and meet the needs of all communities.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Wilton Park hosted a conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria' in February, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from Kaduna State. The conference was an opportunity to discuss how government, faith-based and community organisations can build solutions to intercommunal violence in Nigeria.

The UK Government is supporting local efforts to build solutions to intercommunal violence in Nigeria. As competition over land and resources is leading to violence, our response has included the provision of technical support to the Nigerian Government for the development of the National Livestock Transformation Plan, for which Kaduna State is a pilot state, to promote ranching, an economically viable livestock sector, new jobs and address conflict.

The Prime Minister discussed insecurity in Nigeria with President Buhari at the UK Africa Investment Summit in January. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all Nigerians.

■ Pakistan International Airlines: Accidents

Alan Brown: [\[52171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the crash of the PAI flight on 22 May 2020 on the level of service and availability of PAI flights from Pakistan to the UK.

Nigel Adams:

We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life in the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane crash on 22 May. The Foreign Secretary expressed his condolences, along with other UK Government Ministers. Her Majesty the Queen sent a message of condolence.

We are following carefully the investigation into the cause of the crash. We are aware that many British nationals use PIA flights and since early April over 21,000 British visitors to Pakistan used PIA flights to return to the UK. PIA continue to operate flights to the UK.

■ Pakistan: Coronavirus

Alan Brown: [\[52169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of UK (a) nationals and (b) residents residing in Scotland that are stranded in Pakistan as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Alan Brown: [\[52172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of demand for repatriation flights from Pakistan to a Scottish airport.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Repatriating British travellers from Pakistan is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with the Pakistani government and airlines to ensure British travellers can return home. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. Additionally we have brought home over 35,800 people on 170 flights organised by the Foreign Office from 36 countries and territories of which over 4,400 British travellers and their direct dependents have been repatriated on 21 flights from Pakistan.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not have a central registration system for British travellers who wish to return to the UK so we are unable to estimate how many travellers either UK Nationals or residents of Scotland remain. 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. British travellers are only asked to register for flights with Corporate

Travel Management when charter flights have been announced for a country. Anyone who registered on the booking portal for a UK charter flight has been offered an opportunity to pay for a seat. Those eligible people who paid were offered seats on flights back to the UK. Any British travellers who did not register or pay for a seat but now wish to return to the UK are being encouraged to use commercial options.

We have been liaising closely with Scottish Government colleagues and updating them on our repatriation programme.

■ **Rohingya: Refugees**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[51815]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has held with regional stakeholders to help ensure the development of an effective response to Rohingya refugees displaced at sea.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is clear that the Myanmar military is ultimately responsible for the mass displacement of the Rohingya, which has in turn led many to flee the camps in Bangladesh by boat. We will continue to work for a de-escalation of the current conflict in Rakhine State and a sustainable solution which allows the Rohingya to return to their homes.

The United Kingdom supports the UN's call for a regional effort to ensure the safety of the Rohingya refugees who are displaced at sea, and has held numerous discussions with regional stakeholders to seek a resolution.

On 29 May, the Minister of State for South Asia, Lord Ahmad, raised the issue with the Bangladesh High Commissioner and thanked her after the Bangladesh Navy rescued Rohingya refugees stranded at sea. The British High Commission in Dhaka have also raised the matter with the Government of Bangladesh. Officials from the British Embassy in Bangkok have discussed with the Thai Government the importance of the provision of humanitarian assistance to Rohingyas aboard vessels that enter Thai waters. Our High Commission in Kuala Lumpur continues to raise our concerns about the situation of the Rohingya community with the Malaysian Government. We continue to raise these issues with regional partners, including on how the Bali Process might play a role. The United Kingdom will continue its commitment towards protecting the Rohingya people, who are amongst the most vulnerable in the region.

■ **Sino-British Joint Declaration**

Caroline Lucas:

[53373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for what reason the July-December 2019 six-monthly report on Hong Kong relating to the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong has not yet been published.

Nigel Adams:

The change in the Parliamentary timetable has delayed our original publishing date for the six-monthly report on Hong Kong covering the period July- December 2019. The report will be published soon.

■ Sino-British Joint Liaison Group: Public Records**Mhairi Black:**[\[52117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will suspend the 40 year rule that applies to the records of the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group; and if he will publish those records.

Nigel Adams:

At the time of the handover of Hong Kong, the then Lord Chancellor decided that certain Hong Kong records should be retained for 50 years from 1997 without decennial review, due to their sensitivity. We are not seeking to amend this decision.

■ South Sudan: Violence**Mark Pritchard:**[\[51774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking in response to the recent increase in violence and killings in South Sudan's Jonglei state.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is concerned by recent increases in intercommunal violence in South Sudan's Jonglei state, which has seen hundreds killed and injured and shocking reports of sexual violence. On 21 May I raised my concern publicly at the death of three humanitarian workers caught up in the violence in Jonglei, and urged the Government of South Sudan to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice. Our UK Ambassador in Juba has been following up with government and community leaders to urge restraint, and encourage provision of security and participation in peace dialogues. The UK is also providing funding for peacebuilding programmes in South Sudan to seek to address the underlying drivers of conflict.

The violence in Jonglei and other parts of South Sudan underlines that, despite the 2018 Peace Agreement and reductions in overall political conflict, many South Sudanese continue to live with terrible violence. South Sudan's best chance of a more stable and prosperous future remains the full implementation of the Peace Agreement. The UK, through our Embassy in Juba, the UK Special Envoy, and with our international partners, continues to press for progress. Most recently the UK Ambassador in Juba met South Sudan's Foreign Minister on 25 May to stress our concerns and urge progress. The UK also recently supported the renewal of the UN Arms Embargo on South Sudan to 31 May 2021, which will help to stem the flow of weapons while the conflict remains.

■ Turkey: Human Rights

Catherine West:

[\[52299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart; and whether he raised (a) the detention of journalists and (b) other human rights issues in that country in those discussions.

Wendy Morton:

We regularly raise our human rights concerns with the Turkish authorities at the highest level, particularly around detentions, freedom of expression and association. We continue to urge the authorities to ensure that all detainees are treated in accordance with relevant international human rights standards. We continue to be clear in our expectation that Turkey, like all countries, should live up to its human rights obligations towards all its citizens.

■ UNRWA

Sammy Wilson:

[\[54073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations on replacing the United Nations Relief and Work Agency with a new body working under the rules of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

We have not made representations on this matter. The UK recognises the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) unique mandate from the UN General Assembly, to protect and provide protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. UNRWA is also a vital humanitarian and stabilising force in the region and the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. However, we recognise that UNRWA needs to be on a more secure financial footing, to ensure that Palestinian refugees' basic needs are met. To that end, the UK is working with UNRWA and other donors to help ensure its sustainability. This includes finding further cost savings, broadening UNRWA's donor base, and encouraging multi-year funding.

■ Venezuela Reconstruction Unit

Richard Burgon:

[\[52254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Venezuela Reconstruction Unit, when that unit was established; how many staff that unit has; how many meetings that unit has held with representatives of the (a) Venezuelan government and (b) Venezuelan opposition; and how much Government funding has been allocated to that unit since it was established.

Wendy Morton:

The Venezuela Reconstruction Unit is a small (one Head, and three part-time members including an external consultant) team in the Foreign and Commonwealth

Office, which was established in 2019 to coordinate the UK approach to the international response to the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Venezuela. The UK is committed to working with international partners to bring a peaceful end to the appalling crisis in Venezuela, and the Venezuela Reconstruction Unit is a reflection of that commitment.

The Unit has visited Venezuela in order to understand the challenges and determine how the UK might help. The UK Ambassador ensured the regime were aware of the visit and spoke publicly about the Unit and its staff. The Unit has had contact with Juan Guaidó, whom the UK recognises as constitutional interim President of Venezuela, his representative in London and other Venezuelans.

■ **Yemen: Aviation**

Gill Furniss:

[54201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is taking steps in the UN Security Council to secure sustainable arrangements for emergency flights into Yemen's main airports; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The UK is concerned at continued access restrictions within Yemen, including the closure of Sana'a airport. We are pressing the authorities to facilitate better access through ports and airports to ensure Covid experts and humanitarian personnel and supplies are able to enter Yemen, alongside food and fuel. This will be imperative to facilitate an effective international Covid-19 response. We support the UN Special Envoy's efforts to find a lasting solution to the airport issue with the parties.

■ **Zimbabwe: Abduction**

Lisa Nandy:

[54909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Zimbabwe on a Government of Zimbabwe investigation into the recent abduction and torture of opposition Member of Parliament Joana Mamombe and fellow MDC-Alliance members Cecilia Chimberi and Netsai Marova.

James Duddridge:

The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation in Zimbabwe. It remains one of the UK's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries globally. I spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June and expressed my deep concern regarding recent reports of the abduction and torture of three female opposition activists, including a Member of Parliament. I urged the Foreign Minister to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights, including investigations into violations.

It is vital that the Zimbabwean authorities adhere to their international human rights obligations and respect their Constitution, which prohibits enforced disappearances and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The UK will continue to monitor

developments in Zimbabwe closely and call for the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights.

■ **Zimbabwe: Human Rights**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Zimbabwean counterpart on recent media reports of human rights abuses in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation in Zimbabwe. It remains one of the UK's 30 Human Rights Priority Countries globally. I spoke to the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on 8 June and expressed my deep concern regarding recent reports of the abduction and torture of three female opposition activists, including a Member of Parliament. I urged the Foreign Minister to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights, including investigations into violations.

It is vital that the Zimbabwean authorities adhere to their international human rights obligations and respect their Constitution, which prohibits enforced disappearances and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The UK will continue to monitor developments in Zimbabwe closely and call for the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and respect human rights.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Alcoholism: Rehabilitation**

Neil Coyle:

[\[52041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the number of alcohol inpatient detoxification and inpatient rehabilitation beds available in England has decreased as a result of reallocation to covid-19 patients.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held centrally.

■ **Cancer: Clinical Trials**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[48269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure (a) maintenance and (b) expansion of international cooperation on clinical cancer research trials.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to a world-leading regulatory system for clinical trials that allows us to collaborate effectively globally, ensuring the United Kingdom remains one of the best places in the world for science and innovation and as such

we will ensure that we are at the forefront of clinical trials internationally and that the UK maintains a competitive clinical trials environment in which to conduct clinical trials.

The newly introduced Medicines and Medical Devices Bill provides the UK the means to remain a world-leading regulator and supports the delivery of the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy to make the UK a leading global hub for life sciences. More information on the Bill can be found at the following link:

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/medicinesandmedicaldevices.html>

■ Care Homes and General Practitioners: Protective Clothing

Preet Kaur Gill:

[48572]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the delivery of supplies of personal protective equipment to Birmingham and the West Midlands under the Clipper system has been delayed; and when those supplies will be available to (a) care homes and (b) general practices.

Jo Churchill:

An online personal protective equipment (PPE) Portal is under development to enable primary, social, and community care providers to request critical PPE. The PPE portal is not delayed and has been tested with the sector and is now being scaled up nationally over the coming weeks.

All general practitioners and small social care providers in Birmingham and West Midlands have now been invited to register and order with the PPE Portal.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[46074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support care home residents to maintain virtual contact with friends and family following the outbreak of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 18 May 2020]: To support care home residents to maintain virtual contact with family and friends, NHSX has rapidly established a team to address the needs of those who are vulnerable, isolated or receiving social care support with technology during the COVID-19 outbreak. This team has taken several steps to ensure that care homes have the technological capability to maintain social contact for their residents, including negotiating broadband deals to make sure care homes have the connectivity to access video calls, and a pilot of 2,050 Facebook Portal video-calling devices in care homes across the country. The Department is constantly reviewing the guidance around contact with friends and family for care home residents and is working collaboratively with stakeholders to do so.

Sir Christopher Chope:[\[48942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospital patients in England were discharged to nursing homes and care homes in (a) March and (b) April 2020; and how many of those patients subsequently died from (i) covid-19 and (ii) other causes; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The Government does not hold data on the total number of hospital patients in England who have been discharged from hospital into nursing and care homes. Similarly, the Government does not hold data on how many patients, of those discharged from hospital into residential care, subsequently died from COVID-19 or other causes.

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

■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing**Justin Madders:**[\[52114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many requests for personal protective equipment (PPE) have been made through the care home online portal; how many of those requests for PPE have been fulfilled; and within what timeframe were those requests fulfilled.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Portal was developed to enable primary and social care providers in England to order critical COVID-19 PPE. As of 1 June 2020, the total number of orders received on the PPE Portal was 3,276, with over 1.3 million items of PPE being shipped. PPE ordered through the portal is delivered by Royal Mail. Orders should arrive within 48 hours if the order is placed before 1pm. Orders placed after 1pm will be subject to an additional 24 hours.

■ Coronavirus**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[51512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been reported as contracting covid-19 more than once.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Public Health England is not aware of any patients contracting COVID-19 more than once in England.

■ Coronavirus: Death**Siobhain McDonagh:**[\[42875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have died from covid-19 in the UK, by ethnicity.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service England publishes deaths from COVID-19 reported in hospital settings on their website, which includes a breakdown by ethnicity. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-daily-deaths/>

The Office of National statistics publishes all information related to deaths by ethnic group in England and Wales and includes ethnic breakdowns of deaths by age and sex. Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures below are based on death registrations up to 17 April 2020 that occurred between 2 March and 10 April 2020 and will be updated regularly.

Public Health England (PHE) publishes weekly surveillance reports on GOV.UK with confirmed cases, hospitalisations and deaths broken down by ethnicity. PHE has also undertaken a rapid review to better understand how COVID-19 may be having an impact on different ethnic groups. The first results were published on 2 June.

Public Health England weekly surveillance reports can be found at the following link:

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

All data released by the Department is robust and includes only cases officially confirmed by NHS England or the devolved administrations, following discussion with next of kin.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Ben Lake:****[41575]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will issue guidance on the support grandparents who are not shielded can provide to single parents during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

There are currently no plans to issue guidance on the support that grandparents who are not shielded can provide to single parents. Grandparents who are not shielding should follow the latest advice on staying alert and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic which can be found on the GOV.UK website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Jim Shannon:**[43019]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that immunological expertise is being used to inform his Department's decision-making in relation to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) is an expert committee of the Department which advises the Government. Members include those with expertise in immunology and serology all of whom advise the Chief

Medical Officer and share information with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

SAGE provides expert medical and scientific advice to the Chief Medical Officers of the four United Kingdom Governments, who, in turn, advise Government and agencies in all parts of the UK.

Alyn Smith:

[45449]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the document entitled, Review: does the use of face masks in the general population make a difference to spread of infection, that was presented to SAGE on 9 April 2020, if he will (a) publish that review and (b) the evidence for it.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2020]: Transparency, including on the evidence informing the views of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), is important in helping to maintain the public's trust and helping to grow understanding of the disease, while also helping to explain how advice to the Government is being formed. The Government is working to publish evidence documents and studies which have formed the basis of SAGE's discussions and advice to Ministers regularly and will publish more evidence in the coming weeks.

Andrew Bridgen:

[46656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the rate of infection with covid-19 is for (a) children aged 0-10 and (b) adults over 18 years old in the UK.

Andrew Bridgen:

[46657]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the rate of infection with covid-19 is for (a) young people aged 11-17 and (b) adults over 18 years old in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

We do not have the rate of infection (R) of COVID-19 for different age groups. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies publishes the R number for the United Kingdom on a weekly basis.

R is not usually a useful measure on its own and needs to be considered alongside the number of new cases. More information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

Sarah Champion:

[46680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable to covid-19; how many of those people have received a letter from the Government informing them that they are categorised as such; and how many (a) clinically and (b) non-clinically vulnerable people require assistance for accessing food supplies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2020]: Around 2.2 million people have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable and asked to shield themselves. Comprehensive information on the number of letters sent out is not yet available.

As at 20 May 2020, 341,500 clinically extremely vulnerable people were registered as requiring assistance for accessing food supplies. Information on the number of clinically vulnerable and non-clinically vulnerable people eligible for food supplies through the appropriate channels is not collected centrally.

Julie Elliott:[\[48428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the research of Wanglong Gou and others entitled Gut microbiome may underlie the predisposition of healthy individuals to covid-19, published in April 2020.

Helen Whately:

An assessment has not been carried out on the implications of this research. All new research is important to help us understand the disease and therefore potential effective treatments. The paper will be shared with public health and clinical experts to consider the potential for treatment or prevention options from the study findings.

Julie Elliott:[\[48429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the work of Matthew Zirui Tay and others entitled The trinity of covid-19: immunity, inflammation and intervention, published in Nature on 28 April 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is responsible for ensuring that timely and coordinated scientific advice is made available to decision-makers, to support United Kingdom cross-Government decisions. In fulfilling this role, SAGE considers a wide range of scientific evidence. Our approach has been, and will continue to be, guided by the evidence and latest advice from medical experts, including the Chief Medical Officer.

The scientific evidence supporting the Government response to COVID-19 can be found at the following link:

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

Justin Madders:[\[48495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people with covid-19 who have entered the UK since 1 March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: There is no data to identify the number of people with COVID-19 who have entered the United Kingdom since 1 March 2020.

Between 22 January and 12 March, Public Health England (PHE) put in place an enhanced monitoring package which included expert health system advice from the PHE Port Health team at London Heathrow and local Health Protection Teams ready to identify symptomatic passengers and meet planes if required.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[49017]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's policy is on the distinction between (a) high risk individuals that need to shield and (b) high risk individuals that need to practise social distancing in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The Government's policy on those people considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable and needing to shield is set out at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

This is based on the specific medical conditions that clinicians have identified as placing someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

A list of those groups of people who are considered to be clinically vulnerable but not in the highest clinical risk category is set out at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing

Clinically vulnerable people are not advised to shield as the additional benefit gained from this extra measure needs to be weighed against any impact on mental and physical wellbeing from a significant loss of social contact and needing to stay in the home for a long period of time.

Liam Byrne:

[51616]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the methodology the Government is using to calculate the national R rate for covid-19 infections.

Chi Onwurah:

[51954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data is used and how that data is obtained to calculate the reproductive (r) value for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The process for formulating the R number is a complex one. The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M), which convenes once a week, builds a consensus on the value of R based on expert scientific advice from multiple academic groups. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies then reviews this and provides advice to the Government on the latest R figure. More information on how R is calculated can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-publishes-latest-r-number>

Shabana Mahmood:

[51801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent comparative assessment his Department has made of the rate of infection of covid-19 in multi-generational households and the wider population.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of the United Kingdom-wide range for R on a weekly basis. At the time of writing the current range is estimated to be 0.7-0.9 and is based on latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates. We do not calculate nor compare the R rate in different settings.

Guidance for multigenerational households can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/guidance-for-households-with-grandparents-parents-and-children-living-together-where-someone-is-at-increased-risk-or-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-cov>

Chi Onwurah:

[51959]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the scientific and statistical evidence is on the effect of hand washing and surface hygiene on the spread of covid-19 in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

A rapid review of the literature undertaken by Public Health Scotland (15 May 2020) concluded that hand hygiene should be performed with soap and water or, when hands are not visibly soiled, with alcohol based hand rub and that due to the uncertainty regarding the environmental survivability of SARS-CoV-2 in real-life conditions, it is essential that the environment is clutter free and frequency of routine cleaning is increased, particularly frequently-touched surfaces.

This review is available at the following link:

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2985/documents/1_covid-19-rapid-review-ipc-for-covid-19.pdf

Ian Lavery:

[51977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the covid-19 reproductive (r) rate was in (a) the UK, (b) England, (c) the North East, (d) Northumberland and (e) Wansbeck constituency in each week from 3 February 2020.

Mike Amesbury:

[52423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made progress on plans to publish regional reproductive (r) numbers for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Government Office for Science currently publishes the latest estimate of the United Kingdom-wide range for R on a weekly basis. The current range is estimated

to be 0.7-0.9 and is based on latest data available to determine infection and transmission rates. We do not calculate the R rate for different UK regions.

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies advice. These papers are being published in batches. The full list of papers reviewed to date is available at the following link:

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

This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

■ Coronavirus: Employment

Marsha De Cordova:

[48626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure employers do not use the Government's shielding list for covid-19 to decide who can and cannot travel to work.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: Guidance for adults who are clinically vulnerable remains that they should follow stringent social distancing measures. We continue to advise those who are clinically extremely vulnerable to shield at home until at least the end of June.

The shielded patient list should not be used to determine who is or is not able to travel to work. Guidance for employers can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Shabana Mahmood:

[51803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timescale is for Public Health England's review into the effect of covid-19 on black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Public Health England led a rapid review to better understand how different factors can impact on how people are affected by COVID-19. This includes analysis of ethnicity, deprivation, age, sex (male and female) and obesity, where data was available. The review's findings have now been published and can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes>

■ Coronavirus: Gyms**Justin Madders:** [\[48494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential role of gyms in providing rehabilitation programmes for patients recovering from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made.

■ Coronavirus: North West**Barbara Keeley:** [\[46020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, what recent estimate his Department has made of the reproduction rate of covid-19 in (a) Greater Manchester and (b) the North West of England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2020]: We do not currently publish the reproduction (R) rate in each region. The Government Office for Science published the latest R number range for the United Kingdom on 29 May. The current R number range can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

The Government is committed to publishing the scientific evidence that has informed the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergency's (SAGE) advice. These papers are being published in batches. The latest batches were released on 20 May and 22 May and the next batch will published in the coming weeks. The full list of papers released to date is available at the following the link:

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

This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at recent and future meetings.

■ Coronavirus: Older People**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[49726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people aged over 70 who had no underlying health conditions have (a) needed hospital treatment, (b) needed ICU treatment or (c) died as a result of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: Information on the number of people aged over 70 with no underlying health conditions who have needed hospital or intensive care unit treatment as a result of COVID-19 is not held in the format requested.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides monthly data on deaths involving the COVID-19, by age and pre-existing health conditions. These figures include

deaths where COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate. For age group 70 and over, 2,445 deaths that occurred in March and April 2020 had no pre-existing health conditions. The ONS defines a pre-existing condition as any condition that either preceded the disease of interest (in this instance, COVID-19) in the sequence of events leading to death, or was a contributory factor in the death, but was not part of the causal sequence.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Sam Tarry:

[30200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what assessment he has made of the availability of personal protective equipment for (a) workers who deliver primary care services and (b) GPs; and what additional resources have been allocated to the provision of that equipment.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is working around the clock to give the National Health Service and social care sectors the PPE equipment and support they need to tackle this outbreak. We are working to expand supply from overseas and improve domestic manufacturing capability. The NHS, industry and the Armed Forces have created a PPE distribution network almost from scratch, providing drops of critical equipment to 58,000 healthcare settings including GPs and pharmacies. The Government is working with e-commerce expertise to pilot a new online portal to help primary and social care providers to order critical PPE.

Over 1.6 billion items of PPE have been distributed across the health and social care system.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Transport**

Chi Onwurah:

[51960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 May 2020 to Question 46649 and with reference to the guidance provided, at what temperature should face coverings be washed; and how regularly should clothes be washed.

Jo Churchill:

Face coverings should be washed daily using normal detergent according to fabric washing instructions and can be washed and dried with other items of laundry. Any face covering should be discarded if it shows signs of damage or significant wear and tear after washing.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[48330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether GPs will be informed by the NHS of which patients have been tested for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

We are actively planning to get COVID-19 test results into individual general practitioner (GP) records in England. NHS Digital are leading, working closely with the Royal College of GPs and the British Medical Association. This needs to be carefully done to minimise any clinical safety risks and ensure it is done accurately. We are expecting this to start within the next couple of weeks. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will have their own processes relating to healthcare records.

Coronavirus: Statistics**Dawn Butler:****[41923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) publish and (b) place in the Library the modelling that the Government used to project covid-19 death rates of up to 500,000.

Jo Churchill:

The Government relies on modelling work undertaken by several academic groups, who report to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies through its various subgroups. A collection of modelling information which has informed decision-making on COVID-19 has now been published on the GOV.UK website at the following link:

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

The modelling used to project COVID-19 death rates has been published by the Imperial College COVID-19 Response Team under the title 'Report 9: Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand'. A copy is attached.

Coronavirus: Travellers**Gill Furniss:****[52312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to Question 46117 on Coronavirus: Roma, how Public Health England plans to capture evidence on the outcomes for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, whose ethnic categories are not part of the NHS Data Dictionary.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: It is not currently possible for Public Health England to capture evidence on the outcomes for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, whose ethnic categories are not part of the NHS Data Dictionary. We will raise this issue as part of the work that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) will be taking forward following the publication of PHE's report into disparities in COVID-19 risks and outcomes and we are in discussion with NHS England and NHS Improvement about the equality monitoring data that can and should be gathered.

■ Coronavirus: Vitamin D

John Redwood:

[51507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of whether Vitamin D can help immune systems tackle covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) is monitoring any new, high quality evidence on nutrition and COVID 19 and seeking further advice from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) as appropriate. PHE is currently carrying out a rapid review of recent evidence relating to vitamin D and the prevention of acute respiratory tract infections for SACN to consider.

■ Death

Afzal Khan:

[43753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the reason for the number excess deaths reported by the Office of National Statistics.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 May 2020]: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for publishing weekly numbers of deaths registered in England and Wales. The most recent annual figures published are for deaths registered in 2018. However, the ONS publishes provisional weekly deaths registrations, which are currently published for deaths registered up to 1 May 2020. National Records Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are responsible for publishing the number of deaths registered in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

■ Death: Coronavirus

Scott Mann:

[47381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have died with covid-19 recorded as the cause of death to date; and what proportion of those people had tested positive for covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Daily statistics for COVID-19 related deaths in the United Kingdom, which consist of deaths with lab-confirmed COVID-19 in all settings, are published on the GOV.UK website. The latest data is available at:

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

In addition, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes provisional weekly data on deaths registered in England and Wales where "COVID-19" was mentioned on death certificates. This data can be viewed on the ONS website at the following link:

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

■ Dementia: Research

Daisy Cooper: [52507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made in delivering the Dementia Moonshot.

Helen Whately:

The Government remains strongly committed to research to combat dementia. New plans for supporting people with dementia in England for 2020-25 will be set out later this year. The current mobilisation of the health research system against COVID-19 will impact on the speed with which plans can be implemented.

■ Dental Services: Protective Clothing

Alex Cunningham: [48409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the increase in cost of personal protective equipment for dentists; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Cunningham: [48410]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the tariff for dentists to allow them to meet the increased costs of personal protective equipment.

Jo Churchill:

The Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body (DDRB) is responsible for recommendations on doctors' and dentists' remuneration, both the pay element and, for those working as independent contractors, expenses. It would be for the DDRB to consider expenses created by the additional personal protective equipment (PPE) required due to COVID-19. DDRB recommendations apply to dentists' National Health Service remuneration. Any private earnings and costs are a matter for the individual dentist.

Urgent face to face treatment has been delivered through more than 550 urgent care centres to patients during the Covid crisis.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that NHS dental practices will be able to begin to see patients again, outside of urgent care centres, from 8 June, with the aim of increasing levels of service, as fast as is compatible with maximizing safety.

A copy of the letter that was published can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Urgent-dental-care-letter-28-May.pdf>

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Consultants

Rosie Cooper: [37536]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that immunological expertise is being used in his Department's decision making.

Jo Churchill:

The New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) is an expert committee of the Department which advises the Government. Members include those with expertise in immunology and serology all of whom advise the Chief Medical Officer and share information with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

SAGE provide expert medical and scientific advice to the four United Kingdom Governments' Chief Medical Officers who in turn advise the health and social care systems across the UK, the Government and agencies in all parts of the UK who are involved in responding to this outbreak.

Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[43828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 37422, on Protective Clothing, tabled on 20 April 2020 by the hon. Member for Christchurch.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: The hon. Member's question was answered on 29 May.

Endoscopy**Zarah Sultana:**[\[52557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to increase (a) training and (b) employment of endoscopists for the optimisation of bowel screening.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The Health Education England (HEE) Cancer Workforce Plan commits to produce a further 200 clinical endoscopists by 2021, in addition to the 200 that were already committed, to support an increase in capacity for earlier diagnosis. As at May 2020, 247 have either been trained or are currently in training.

A training support package was made available by HEE in 2017-20 to support the training of some clinical endoscopist trainees. Training grant arrangements have been further agreed for cohorts commencing in late 2020 to support trusts to put trainees forward and to provide the necessary clinical supervision throughout the programme.

An initial evaluation shows trainees are helping to meet clinical demand, reduce waiting lists and contributing to a good patient experience.

■ Exercise Cygnus

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Ministers in his Department received the report on Exercise Cygnus; and on what date those Ministers received that report.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government took to prepare for a global health pandemic following the publication of the Exercise Cygnus report.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what dates cross-governmental meetings to discuss the Exercise Cygnus report on pandemic preparedness took place.

Jo Churchill:

Working across Government and with stakeholders, the lessons identified from Exercise Cygnus have informed our preparedness, such as development of draft legislation support to the response to a future influenza pandemic and strengthening health sector plans to surge and flex beyond normal operations. Learning the lessons from preparedness exercises, as well as other sources of expertise has ensured that the United Kingdom remains well prepared for infectious disease outbreaks.

Ministers at the Department participated in Exercise Cygnus and have been kept informed of the subsequent work to strengthen our preparedness.

The lessons learned from Exercise Cygnus continue to be discussed and considered by the Government and a range of stakeholders, including expert advisory groups and local emergency planners in reviewing response plans.

■ Health Professions: Protective Clothing

Neil Coyle: [\[39608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure professionals in primary and secondary care have access to adequate training on how to fit personal protective equipment.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[39721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the efficacy of the (a) coverage and (b) fit of masks that are being supplied to front line key workers with beards.

Dan Jarvis: [\[41049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that female NHS staff have properly fitting personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Lucas:

[41421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether there is adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) designed to fit the range of (a) female and (b) male sizes; what steps he is taking to ensure that all workers who require PPE have equipment that fits them properly; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: The United Kingdom Government and devolved administrations have published clear guidance on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for health and social care workers. It is critical that health and care workers make themselves aware of and follow these procedures, so they do not risk exposing themselves to Covid-19 as they remove PPE.

The National Medical Director and Chief Nursing Officer of NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to NHS Chief Executives, Chief Nurses and Medical Directors, emphasising the importance of proper fit testing of disposable sessional personal PPE face masks (such as FFP3 masks).

The Government published “Coronavirus (COVID-19): PPE plan” on 10 April. It incorporates guidance on who needs PPE and when they need it, routes to ensure those who need it can get it at the right time and sets out actions to secure enough PPE to last through the crisis. This can be found at the following link:

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

Health and Safety Executive have [published guidance](#) on fit testing including manual fit testing. In event of no fluid, staff should use the make and model of mask they have previously been fit tested for.

Lord Deighton, formerly Chief Executive of London 2012 Olympics, has been appointed to lead on our domestic efforts to increase the supply of PPE. Contracts have been signed for over 2 billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons, ensuring we build and maintain a domestic base for the future. Both the MAKE team and NHS England are looking specifically at the gender appropriateness of PPE.

■ Health Services: Coronavirus

Jonathan Ashworth:

[48444]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help prevent shortages of (a) tests for covid-19 and (b) personal protective equipment for healthcare workers in the event of a second wave of covid-19 infections.

Jo Churchill:

The safety of healthcare staff remains paramount during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government is taking action to ensure the availability of testing for COVID-19 and personal protective equipment (PPE) to meet both current and future demand. National Health Service staff and care home residents and workers will continue to be

prioritised as we increase testing capacity across the country towards 200,000 tests a day. We have contracted with over 100 new suppliers able to deliver at the scale and pace the United Kingdom requires. Over 1.5 billion items of PPE have been delivered across the health and social care system within England with tens of millions more items distributed in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

■ Health Services: Disadvantaged

Clive Lewis:

[\[52267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to develop a national strategy for tackling health inequalities in England as part of recovering from the effects of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The Government remains committed to levelling up and spreading opportunity around this country – this will be an important part of the economic and social recovery from this pandemic.

The recent review published on 2 June 2020 by Public Health England, ‘Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19’, illustrates that some people are significantly more vulnerable to COVID-19.

We are looking very closely at the health inequalities aspects of this report as part of the work that is being led by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) to further understand the impacts.

■ Heart Diseases: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel:

[\[52421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the guidance for people with heart disease is updated to include the effects of covid-19 on heart disease sufferers.

Jo Churchill:

In partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has developed heart disease guidelines and evidence summaries with support from clinical specialists, the specialist societies and Royal Colleges to help the National Health Service and social care to respond quickly to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement are accelerating some of the positive lessons learnt from the pandemic, such as the enhanced use of digital technology for cardiac rehabilitation and a greater application of remote consultations, to bring forward the delivery of some of the ambitions outlined within the Long Term Plan for patients with heart disease.

In parallel, to support cardiac services in England during the pandemic and restoration period, a national Cardiac Network has provided system support in

collaboration with the Getting It Right First Time team, so that there is consistent advice to clinical teams on restoring services.

■ **Influenza: Vaccination**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[51523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the locations at which flu vaccinations can be accessed by the public in winter 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working with colleagues at NHS England and NHS Improvement, and Public Health England on the delivery of the 2020/21 seasonal flu vaccination programme. As part of these discussions we are working to expand access to vaccination, so that more people who are eligible for flu vaccination are protected this winter. To improve access to vaccinations is already available through general practice, community pharmacies, schools, community and other National Health Service settings. We will be publishing a further annual flu letter 2020/21 which will provide more detailed information on the flu programme ahead of the flu season.

■ **Joint Biosecurity Centre**

Helen Hayes:

[\[49779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the (a) advice and (b) reports of the Joint Biosecurity Centre are published.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: Information on how the Joint Biosecurity Centre will share information with national and local decision makers, as well as the public, will be provided in the near future.

■ **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: Trade Agreements**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[49850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is the Government's policy to reject any reduction in the powers of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence during future trade talks.

Jo Churchill:

The Government will continue to ensure that decisions about public services are made by the United Kingdom Government and the devolved administrations, not our trade partners.

When negotiating trade deals, the National Health Service, the price the NHS pays for drugs, and the services the NHS provides will not be on the table. This position was reaffirmed in our published negotiating objectives for UK-United States and UK-Japan trade deals.

■ New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[49085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Welsh Government was offered observer status on the New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The Chief Medical Officers from all devolved administrations have a delegate that attends the New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) meetings in an observer capacity. Thus, the Welsh Government does have representation at the NERVTAG meetings, as do all devolved administrations.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[49086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the minutes and reports of the New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group have been shared with the Welsh Government in each year since 2015.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) secretariat does not routinely circulate the minutes of meetings or reports to anyone outside of the list of members and observers, unless they are specifically requested. However, all minutes and reports are published online and are freely accessible.

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[49087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Welsh Government was represented on the New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group sub-committee on facemasks and respirators.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: New and Emerging Respiratory Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) subcommittees do not usually have observers like the main committee meetings. Subcommittees usually only consist of a subgroup of NERVTAG committee members and may recruit temporary co-opted specialists if this is relevant and important to the subject matter. Subcommittees always report back to the main committee.

■ NHS: Training

Justin Madders: [\[38601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff have undertaken additional training to support patients with respiratory needs since 31 January 2020.

Helen Whately:

Information on the number of National Health Service staff who have undertaken additional training to support patients with respiratory needs is not collected centrally. It would be for individual trusts to train staff according to local needs and demand.

A variety of guidance on workforce, including the principles for increasing the nursing workforce in response to exceptional increased demand in adult critical care, can be found on NHS England's website and accessed via the following link:

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

■ Obesity**Mary Glendon:****[51965]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, published on 5 May 2020 by NHS Digital, what steps his Department is taking to reduce hospital admissions (a) directly attributable to obesity and (b) where obesity was a factor; and if he will make a statement.

Mary Glendon:**[51969]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how admissions are coded in hospitals for obesity; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Through the three chapters of 'Childhood obesity: a plan for action' we are bringing forward a wide range of measures to reduce the prevalence of children who are obese. We have seen important successes including the average sugar content of drinks subject to the soft drinks industry levy decreasing by 28.8% between 2015 and 2018, and significant investment being made in schools to promote physical activity and healthy eating. Many of the measures in the plan will have an impact on reducing obesity across all age groups.

Unicef's 'State of the World's Children' report, published in October 2019, recognised that "the United Kingdom is paving the way to ensure that all children grow up in a healthy food environment". The Unicef report is available at the following link:

www.unicef.org/media/61356/file/SOWC-2019.pdf

NHS Digital has advised that the Hospital Episodes Statistics uses World Health Organization International Classification of Diseases v.10 (ICD-10) to record the main diagnosis and any secondary co-morbidities. Within ICD-10 obesity is assigned as code E66 and this will be recorded on any episode of care where a clinical diagnosis of obesity has been made. The NHS Digital coding standard DCS.IV.3: Obesity (E66) states: Codes in category E66 Obesity must only be coded when a diagnosis of obesity is recorded in the medical record. Where body mass index (BMI) has been recorded in the medical record, this must not be used to assign a code from category E66.- Obesity. A clinical coder must always refer to the responsible consultant to confirm the clinical significance of a test result, for example BMI reading and/or relationship to a specific condition.

■ Obesity: Children

Mary Glendon: [51966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, published on 5 May 2020 by NHS Digital, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity in the most deprived areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mary Glendon: [51968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people (a) who live with obesity and (b) who are adversely affected by covid-19 as lockdown measures are eased; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Through the three chapters of 'Childhood obesity: a plan for action' we are delivering a wide range of measures to help achieve our bold ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030 and significantly reduce the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. We have seen important successes including the average sugar content of drinks subject to the soft drinks industry levy decreasing by 28.8% between 2015 and 2018, and significant investment being made in schools to promote physical activity and healthy eating.

The Government has set out its plan to return life to as near normal as we can, for as many people as we can, as quickly and fairly as possible in order to safeguard livelihoods, but in a way that is safe and continues to protect our NHS. The full guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

■ Obesity: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon: [51970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 34 of Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, published in May 2020, what preventative and personalised solutions his Department plans to implement for people with obesity; and if he will make a statement.

Jim Shannon: [51971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the risks of covid-19 infection to children with obesity living in deprived communities; and if he will make a statement.

Jim Shannon: [51972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to introduce an obesity strategy for adults in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and what

discussions (a) Ministers and (b) officials of his Department have had on that matter since March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The Government will invest in preventative and personalised solutions to ill-health, empowering individuals to live healthier and more active lives. This will involve expanding the infrastructure for active travel, for example cycling and walking, and expanding health screening services, especially through the NHS Health Check programme, which is currently under review.

Public Health England led a rapid review to better understand how different factors can impact on how people are affected by COVID-19. This includes analysis of age, deprivation and obesity, where data was available. The review's findings were published on 2 June and are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes>

Many of the measures in the three chapters of the childhood obesity plan will have an impact on tackling obesity across all age groups. These include the soft drinks industry levy, sugar reduction and wider calorie reformulation programme, restricting promotions and calorie labelling in restaurants which will improve our eating habits and reduce the amount of sugar we consume.

There are ongoing discussions between Ministers and officials as part of developing and delivering the obesity programme.

■ **Ovarian Cancer: Diagnosis**

Zarah Sultana:

[52554]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on achieving a shorter diagnostic pathway for ovarian cancer in England of the conclusions of the Target Ovarian Cancer report entitled Time is running out: the need for early diagnosis in ovarian cancer.

Jo Churchill:

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

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

The CA125 blood test, followed by an ultrasound for raised CA125 is the current process recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus**Rosie Cooper:** [\[49618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all pharmacy staff have access to (a) covid-19 tests and (b) personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Rosie Cooper: [\[49620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that pharmacists are included in (a) the next stage of the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak, (b) plans for the roll-out of testing and (c) forthcoming vaccination programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: Ministers, officials and NHS England and NHS Improvement have been in regular contact with the pharmacy sector in relation to phase one of the response to the pandemic and continue to engage with them, seeking views and support, as we move into phase two. This include plans for the roll-out of testing and any forthcoming COVID-19 related vaccination programmes.

We are committed to increasing testing capacity so everyone who needs a test can access one. As a result, COVID-19 testing eligibility has recently expanded to all symptomatic people in England and Wales, and all symptomatic people over the age of five across the United Kingdom.

Rosie Cooper: [\[49619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the additional funding needs of the community pharmacy sector during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The Government has put in place an unprecedented financial package, providing support to all businesses, including community pharmacies, such as tax deferrals and cash grants of up to £25,000 for small businesses. Due to the specific pressures faced by community pharmacy, we have made available £350 million in extra advance payments to alleviate cash flow pressures. Additional community pharmacy funding has been provided to cover the costs of Bank Holiday opening, the new medicine delivery service for shielded patients, and to contribute to measures taken by community pharmacy to support social distancing. From June, there was also an increase of £15 million per month to reimbursement prices of the most commonly prescribed generic medicines.

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

■ Pharmacy: Protective Clothing

Theresa Villiers:

[51695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure community pharmacies can obtain personal protective equipment during the covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) packs were made to community pharmacies in March. Further supplies of PPE have been distributed to wholesalers and distributor networks supplying community pharmacies.

Where there remains an urgent need for additional PPE stock, which community pharmacies are unable to obtain through their business as usual wholesaler routes, they should contact their Local Resilience Forums who can provide supplies to respond to local spikes in need. For those who are critically short of PPE, they should phone the National Supply Distribution Response for an urgent delivery. We will continue to work to ensure community pharmacies have access to PPE.

■ Protective Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Rachel Hopkins:

[38983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many businesses based in Luton South have (a) made offers to his Department to manufacture Personal Protective Equipment and (b) received orders from his Department to manufacture that equipment.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the information in the format requested, identifiable to a specific location.

Lord Deighton is leading the Government's efforts to secure sufficient PPE and ensure this gets to where it is needed. He is also driving forward coordination of the end-to-end process design and manufacture of new domestic PPE supplies. The Department has entered into contract and placed orders with several manufacturers to provide millions of items of PPE products to the National Health Service and carers. Details of this work can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-more-items-of-ppe-for-frontline-staff-from-new-business-partnerships><https://www.gov.uk/government/news/70-million-face-masks-for-nhs-and-care-workers-through-new-industry-deal>

The volumes will increase in the coming weeks.

■ Protective Clothing: Turkey

Justin Madders: [\[46094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) items of personal protective equipment (PPE) in total and (b) gowns were in the Royal Air Force delivery of PPE from Ankara to RAF Brize Norton on 22 April 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2020]: 185,000 gowns and coveralls were transported from Turkey to the United Kingdom by the Royal Air Force on 22 April.

■ Public Health: Coronavirus

Daniel Zeichner: [\[45257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps will be taken to protect public health during stage-five of the covid-19 warning system.

Jo Churchill:

As the Prime Minister said in his statement on Sunday 10 May, the Government is currently establishing a new COVID-19 Alert System run by a new Joint Biosecurity Centre, which will be established swiftly over the coming days. The details of the system are still being finalised and we will have further details on this in due course.

Mhairi Black: [\[48499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what contribution his Department made to the 11 May 2020 Cabinet Office Staying alert and safe (social distancing) advice.

Helen Whately:

The Department works closely across Government in developing COVID-19 guidance. The 11 May 2020 Staying Alert and Safe (social distancing) guidance, published by the Cabinet Office, included contributions from Departmental policy units and Public Health England (an arm's length body of the Department) and was approved by Public Health England, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

■ Voluntary Work: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas: [\[34961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how (a) Community Response Volunteers will work with existing community groups, (b) information on that scheme will be shared locally and (c) volunteers will be matched up with people in need; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We have launched the National Health Service Volunteer Responders programme to support the health and social care sectors to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme was developed to compliment local level volunteering activity and we have worked with local authorities and the voluntary and charity sector, as well as those shielding, to make them aware of the programme and how people can be referred to it.

NHS Volunteer Responders are matched up with those who need their services through the GOODSAM app.

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Housing

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[51582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure the adequate provision of self-contained accommodation for asylum seekers to enable effective social distancing.

Chris Philp:

We are carefully following PHE Guidance which recommends that separate rooms should be provided for symptomatic people, or they should be moved to hotels. Those with underlying health conditions and people over 70 years of age should also be moved to the appropriate hotel accommodation following PHE guidance, unless individuals do not wish to be moved. We are reviewing each case on an individual basis and continue to work with our providers to ensure the guidance is followed.

■ Asylum: Travel

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[51583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to minimise the distance that asylum seekers have to travel to process their asylum application during the covid-19 outbreak to ensure their safety and that of the general public.

Chris Philp:

Keeping our border secure is the Government's highest priority and we are committed to doing everything we can to stop these dangerous Channel crossings which are putting vulnerable lives at risk.

The Home Office liaises directly with the French Interior Ministry on addressing the issue of illegal migration, engaging at an official, diplomatic level and supported at an operational level through regular UK-French Migration Committees.

Through joint-working with France, the UK has funded the continued deployment of French law enforcement along the coast of northern France, who are patrolling constantly in order to detect attempted crossings by migrants. Funding has been allocated, among other projects, for further security improvements at ports in northern France and on the ground, which includes drones, specialist vehicles and detection equipment to stop small boats leaving European shores.

Intelligence flows are also key to dismantling the organised crime groups behind crossings. We have restructured and repurposed our approach to support to better inform and direct how and where law enforcement is deployed.

■ Aviation: Passengers

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Office, if she will publish the number of passengers that arrived at UK airports from abroad (a) from 11 May 2020 to 18 May 2020 and (b) from 19 May 2020 to 26 May 2020.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on passenger arrivals to the UK in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of arrivals can be found in the admissions tables. Information on passenger arrivals up to the end of June 2020 will be published in the August 2020 release.

In addition, the Home Office published Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020, which includes information on the impact of COVID-19 on passenger arrivals.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

■ Aviation: Quarantine

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[51564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the scientific evidence is for imposing a quarantine requirement on arrivals from countries with a lower rate of covid-19 infection than the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The scientific advice is that when domestic transmission of Covid-19 is reduced, new health measures at the border are an important part of managing the risk of new cases entering the UK from abroad and contributing to a second peak of the virus.

■ British Nationality: Ceremonies

Valerie Vaz:

[\[54906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many citizenship ceremonies have been cancelled as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Valerie Vaz:

[\[54907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are waiting for citizenship ceremonies.

Valerie Vaz:

[54908]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to extend the three month period for people who have been issued with letters confirming citizenship ceremonies; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Following Government guidelines and social distancing measures, normal arrangements for citizenship ceremonies have been suspended at present. The volume of individuals awaiting citizenship ceremonies is a matter for Local Authorities and figures are not recorded centrally by the Home Office.

The time allowed for people to arrange a citizenship ceremony has already been extended to 6 months. Local Authorities are currently liaising with applicants and exploring alternative options to resume ceremonies.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Richard Burgon:

[52257]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been fined for breaching the covid-19 lockdown restrictions in order to seek childcare in (a) Leeds, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) the UK.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

Data on the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued under the new emergency COVID-19 health regulations, are published by the NPCC on a fortnightly basis. Information on the reason for which a fine was issued is included however the level of detail requested is not available. The latest statistics can be found here: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/fixed-penalty-notice-issued-under-covid-29th-may-v1>

Policing is a devolved matter and FPNs issued by Police Scotland and Police Service Northern Ireland are reported separately by the respective forces.

■ **Drugs: Organised Crime**

Mary Kelly Foy:

[54252]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle county lines drug trafficking and safeguard vulnerable children from exploitation.

Kit Malthouse:

We are investing £25m to crack down on county lines gangs in 19/20 and 20/21. Through our county lines programme we are expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre, increasing disruption on the rail networks by British Transport Police, delivering operational intensification in the three key exporting areas, investing in new technology including Automatic Number Plate Recognition and providing increased support for victims of county lines exploitation. Our investment is already delivering results; as a result of the first phase, between November 2019

and March 2020, police forces have made over 650 arrests, closed nearly 140 deal lines, seized cash and drugs with a total value of over £3 million, and made over 100 weapons seizures. Officers have also safeguarded scores of individuals, including 140 children, from being ex-ploited by these gangs.

■ Dublin Convention

Paul Girvan:

[52372]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been transferred from the UK to a EU member state under the Dublin Convention in each of the last five years by nationality; and which countries those people were transferred to.

Chris Philp:

The Dublin Convention was replaced by the Dublin Regulation in 2003. The Dublin III Regulation is a long-standing mechanism between EU Member States to determine responsibility for examining asylum claims. It is not an application route for transfer to the UK.

The Home Office publishes data on the number of asylum seekers transferred under the Dublin regulation in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of asylum seekers transferred out of the UK under the Dublin Regulation, broken down by the EU member state they have been transferred to are published in tables Dub_D01 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending December 2019.

Please note, that we do not publish the breakdowns of the nationality of those being transferred under the Dublin regulation.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on asylum and resettlement.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

Full guidance on Dublin III Regulation was published on 30/04/2020 and can be found via the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882400/Dublin-III-regulation-v3.0ext.pdf

■ Firearms: Licensing

Sir Mike Penning:

[48958]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has received representations on Derbyshire constabulary advising firearms licence holders not to contact hon Members in relation to the firearms licensing system operated by Derbyshire Police.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office has not received representations from the public about Derbyshire constabulary advising firearms licence holders to refrain from contacting their Member of Parliament about licensing matters. We are aware that the 'Derbyshire Alert' community messaging system recently carried a post inviting firearms applicants to contact the force licensing department directly for advice on current processes for firearms licensing, and in particular in relation to background medical checks. This does not, of course, prevent any member of the public from contacting their MP about any matter of concern

■ Fraud: Internet**Sajid Javid:**[\[51848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle online fraud during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Brokenshire:

We are aware that criminals are attempting to exploit opportunities around the coronavirus. The Government and law enforcement colleagues are working tirelessly to identify and disrupt those seeking to commit these online crimes.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have launched a Suspicious Email Reporting Service. This allows members of the public to forward any suspicious emails to them which will be analysed and, if a site is found to be fraudulent or malicious, it will be removed immediately. Members of the public can forward suspicious emails to: report@phishing.gov.uk

We have worked closely with the National Crime Agency, the Financial Conduct Authority, UK Finance and others to amplify messages to the public setting out how they can protect themselves from fraud.

We have also launched a gov.uk page on coronavirus related fraud and cybercrime, including easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves, as well as signposting all relevant advice and tips.

This page can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>

■ Hate Crime: Internet**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[52338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress has been made on the Online Hate Speech Dashboard created in partnership with the National Police Chief's Council and Cardiff University.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Police Chief's Council's (NPCC) partnership with Cardiff University is still in development and is intended to design a tool for understanding trends in hateful sentiment online. The tool is currently in a pilot stage.

■ **Ilaitia Cokanasiga****Dan Jarvis:**[\[28087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the case of Commonwealth-born army veteran, Ilaitia Cokanasiga, who was refused entry to the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The Government highly values the service of all members of HM Forces, including Commonwealth nationals.

We are committed to upholding our obligations under the Armed Forces Covenant, to ensure that no one who is serving, or who has served, or their family members are disadvantaged as a result of their service.

The Ministry of Defence make clear to foreign and Commonwealth recruits into the Forces the process by which they and their families can attain settlement in the UK, and the costs involved.

■ **Immigrants: Detainees****Stuart C McDonald:**[\[52073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been newly detained under immigration detention powers since the beginning of the covid-19 lockdown in (a) immigration removal centres and (b) prisons, broken down by nationality.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on people entering detention in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on the number of people entering detention under immigration powers by quarter and nationality are published in table Det_D01 of the immigration detention detailed datasets.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the 'Summary tables'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

A statistical report Statistics relating to Covid-19 and the immigration system, May 2020, released on 28 May 2020 provides further high-level information relating to detention and Covid-19.

Figures covering the second quarter of 2020 will be released on 27 August 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

■ Immigrants: Health Services

Afzal Khan: [52450]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many NHS nurses have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge for each year since 2016.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has no published data to provide an answer to this question.

Afzal Khan: [52451]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many nurses working in non-NHS commissioned services have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge in each year since 2016.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has no published data to provide an answer to this question.

Afzal Khan: [52452]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many health and care organisations in (a) Manchester Gorton constituency and (b) England have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge on behalf of overseas (i) nurses and (ii) doctors in each year since 2016.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has no published data to provide an answer to this question.

Afzal Khan: [52453]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish the evidence and cost modelling behind the planned increase of the Immigration Health Surcharge to £634 per adult and £470 per child; and if she will make a statement.

Afzal Khan: [52454]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department will conduct an equality impact assessment of the Immigration Health Surcharge on internationally educated health and care workers; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

An Impact Assessment was completed to support the Immigration Health Surcharge Order, increasing the surcharge to £624 per adult and to £470 for children, students and those on the Youth Mobility scheme. It is published here:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2020/30/pdfs/ukia_20200030_en.pdf

This Impact Assessment sets out the direct impacts including the expected increase in surcharge revenue for HMG as well as any wider economic impacts of the policy.

Claire Hanna: [52596]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she make an assessment of the potential merits of ending the NHS surcharge for all migrant workers.

Kevin Foster:

The overall purpose of the Surcharge is to benefit the NHS, help to care for the sick and save lives.

NHS and wider health and social care workers from abroad make a fantastic contribution. However, it is fair to expect people arriving in the UK to work in non-healthcare roles to make a contribution to the brilliant NHS services to which they can access.

■ Immigration**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[52542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure the adequacy and appropriateness of immigration policy during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office regularly reviews immigration policy and has taken a number of steps to ensure no one will be penalised for circumstances outside of their control.

We have acted on feedback from customers and stakeholders and worked with other Government departments to take a compassionate and pragmatic approach to an unprecedented situation.

Navendu Mishra:[\[52589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to suspend the minimum income requirements for people applying for (a) Further Leave to Remain and (b) Indefinite Leave to Remain as a spouse or partner during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and take these exceptional circumstances into account.

To ensure a spouse or partner applying for entry clearance, leave to remain or indefinite leave are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control, for the purpose of the minimum income requirement:

- A temporary loss of employment income between 1 March and 31 July 2020 due to COVID-19, will be disregarded provided the requirement was met for at least six months up to March 2020.
- An applicant or sponsor furloughed under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be deemed as earning 100% of their salary.
- A temporary loss of annual income due to COVID-19 between 1 March 2020 and 31 July 2020 will generally be disregarded for self-employment income, along with the impact on employment income from the same period for future applications. Income received via the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will also be taken into account.

- Evidential flexibility may be applied where an applicant or sponsor experiences difficulty accessing specified evidence due to COVID-19 restrictions.

These concessions are set out for customers on GOV.UK here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>.

The minimum income requirement can also be met in several ways in addition to or instead of income from employment or self-employment. For example, income from the couple's investments, property rental or pension may also be taken into account, together with their cash savings.

■ Police: Demonstrations

Nadia Whittome: [53673]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with representatives from the National Police Chiefs Council on (a) guidance for policing protests while the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 are in force and (b) arresting protesters under those regulations.

Nadia Whittome: [53674]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the effect of (a) Regulation 7 of the Coronavirus Regulations 2020 and (b) the police use of powers under those regulations at recent protests on people's ability to exercise their right to protest under articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Kit Malthouse:

The footage of George Floyd's death is deeply upsetting and we appreciate the strength of feeling behind the planned #BlackLivesMatter protests, but it is vital to remember that we are still in the midst of a public health crisis. We strongly support the right to protest peacefully, but this pandemic has led to many of our individual freedoms being curtailed because everyone has a role to play in helping to control the virus following the rules. This is how we can continue to save lives so we can recover. Under the current regulations, gatherings of more than six people from different households are not permitted. We are in close contact with police to ensure they are prepared to respond to any public disorder and have appropriate policing plans in place. How they use these powers is an operational matter for the police, who are independent of Government. The Police have adopted an effective approach of the 4Es; engaging, explaining and encouraging compliance before moving to enforcement options. The National Police Chiefs Council and the College of Policing have issued guidance on how they will enforce the regulation. This can be found at <https://www.college.police.uk/News/College-news/Pages/Health-Protection-Guidelines.aspx>. Chief constables from forces across the country, the Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Chief Executive of the College of Policing and the President of the Police Superintendents' Association made a statement following the death of George Floyd, which is published at

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/uk-police-stand-with-those-appalled-by-george-floyd-death>

■ **Police: Firearms**

Mrs Theresa May: [48924]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government response to the Anthony Grainger public inquiry published on 19 May 2020, which body will hold the register of recommendations on armed policing referred to in recommendation 1 of that inquiry.

Mrs Theresa May: [48925]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government response to the Anthony Grainger public inquiry published on 19 May 2020, what role the College of Policing will play in implementing recommendation 1 of that inquiry.

Mrs Theresa May: [48926]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 28 of the Government response to the Anthony Grainger public inquiry published on 19 May 2020, what discussions (a) she and (b) the Policing Minister had with the (i) NPCC and (ii) College of Policing on the NPCC's decision to take responsibility for the implementation of recommendation 6 of that inquiry.

Mrs Theresa May: [48927]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government response to the Anthony Grainger public inquiry published on 19 May 2020, what role the College of Policing will play in (a) implementing and (b) assessing lessons learnt from the implementation of the recommendations of that inquiry.

Kit Malthouse:

The Anthony Grainger Inquiry identified important lessons to be learnt. The recommendations for policing and the effectiveness and safety of armed policing are welcome. Our sympathy is with Anthony Grainger's family. My officials worked closely with NPCC and College of Policing, as well as Greater Manchester Police, following publication of the Anthony Grainger Inquiry Report last July. The National Armed Policing lead will hold the register of recommendations on behalf of National Police Chiefs Council. The College of Policing is represented on the organisational learning board, introduced by the NPCC lead for armed policing, which manages the national register for all recommendations. This will ensure that the learning identified can be quickly reflected in the College's authorised professional practice (APP) and national police firearms training curriculum (NPFTC). The implementation of the recommendation on Mobile Armed Support To Surveillance (MASTS) was complex and required a review of national armed policing policy and training. Hence it was considered right for NPCC to take the lead, with input from the College of Policing and Greater Manchester Police. The College of Policing has a team dedicated to

armed policing which works very closely with the NPCC armed policing lead and other key stakeholders. The College is directly involved in progressing the recommendations that have specific implications for national guidance and training.

■ **Police: High Speed 2 Railway Line**

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[48928]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse was of each police force involved in policing the line of route of HS2 for (a) financial year 2019-20 and (b) 2020 to date.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department does not centrally collect information on the cost to the public purse for each police force involved in policing the line of route of HS2.

■ **Police: Protective Clothing**

Nadia Whittome:

[53672]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy that police officers deployed to police public order should wear personal protective equipment, including face masks.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government recognises the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all of those on the frontline and has published guidance on appropriate PPE for emergency workers, including the police. The NPCC 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. The guidance is available online here: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/Documents/Personal-Protective-Equipment-Operational-Guidance-1.pdf>

■ **Police: Retirement**

Dehenna Davison:

[52485]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support the mental wellbeing of retired police officers.

Dehenna Davison:

[52486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the long-term effect on a person's mental health and wellbeing of serving in the police.

Dehenna Davison:

[52487]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of including support for the mental health of retired police officers through the proposed Police Covenant.

Dehenna Davison:

[\[52488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of recently retired police officers who have re-joined forces during that outbreak.

Dehenna Davison:

[\[52489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to offer mental health and wellbeing support to police officers on retirement.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government takes the mental health and wellbeing of our police extremely seriously and we understand that the current crisis will have an impact on all of those working in policing, including those who have re-joined forces to support the response to Covid-19.

We have invested in programmes which offer help directly to police officers and staff. This includes £7.5 million to fund the development of the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS), which was launched in April 2019.

The NPWS has developed evidence-based guidance, advice, tools and resources which can be accessed by forces, as well as individual officers and staff. This helps Chief Constables in their duty to ensure the wellbeing of all officers and staff, by signposting to relevant services and additional support.

However, we want to go further, and have therefore accelerated work to introduce a Police Covenant, recognising the service and sacrifice of those who work, or have worked, in policing and to deliver the practical support they need. The key areas of focus will be physical protection, health and wellbeing and support for families.

Following an 8-week public consultation on the principle and scope of the Police Covenant, we are currently analysing the responses and intend to publish our response during the summer. Mental health and wellbeing support specifically for retired officers, including any additional needs as a result of the Covid-19 response, will be considered as part of this.

The Police Covenant will be put into law as part of the Police Protection and Powers Bill announced in the Queen's Speech; we aim to introduce the Bill later this session.

■ Prosecutions: Racial Discrimination

Catherine West:

[\[53545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of racism were recorded in each year from 2015 to 2020; and how many of those incidents resulted in a prosecution.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on the number of racially motivated hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales.

The latest 'Hate Crime, England and Wales' statistical bulletin contains the number of racially motivated hate crimes in Table 2 and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

Data on prosecutions are published by the Ministry of Justice. These data include outcomes for 'racially or religiously aggravated' offences only as it is not possible to separately identify other hate crimes which are prosecuted under the specific offence in legislation that they fall under. The latest data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2019>

■ Quarantine: Coronavirus

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of passengers entering the UK who cannot provide a residential address and will need to be provided with accommodation by the Government in order to comply with quarantine restrictions in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Kevin Foster:

We don't have an assessment of this data. However, we expect numbers to be very low. Passenger numbers in total have decreased by a significant amount and a very small proportion of those who do arrive in the UK will require Government provided accommodation. To ensure we have the resources in place to deal with this, we have setup a flexible accommodation booking service to ensure we can meet any arising demand.

■ Quarantine: Enforcement

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of enforcement officers required to visit residential addresses to check that people who have returned to the UK from overseas are complying with quarantine requirements in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Kit Malthouse:

New measures being introduced from 8 June will require all passengers arriving in the UK, who do not fall under a specified exemption, to self-isolate for 14 days to reduce cases of COVID-19 being brought in from abroad and to help prevent a devastating second wave of the disease.

These passengers, who will be required to complete a locator form up to 48 hours before their arrival in the UK, could be contacted throughout this 14-day period via an assurance service that will randomly sample and contact non-exempted arrivals to ensure compliance. They will ensure that people understand the restrictions as well as how to recognise symptoms, and what to do if they are experiencing them. Calls

will also include an assurance check as to whether individuals are complying with restrictions.

Where there is reason to suspect that an individual is not complying, details will be passed to the relevant police force who will consider enforcement action. Police will continue to take the 4 'E's approach of engage, explain, encourage and, as a last resort, enforce. Given the high levels of compliance we have seen to our measures to date, we expect that the majority of people would do the right thing and abide by these measures.

■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes

Alex Norris:

[\[54229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason Recovery Needs Assessments are being carried out during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps she has taken to ensure people currently in support are not adversely affected by that assessment process.

Victoria Atkins:

This Government is committed to stamping out modern slavery and providing victims with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

The Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) process takes place for all confirmed victims of modern slavery who are receiving support through the Victim Care Contract (VCC) to ensure that support is tailored to their individual recovery needs. This process informs a tailored move-on plan, with the aim of establishing longer-term stability by helping victims to transition out of VCC support and back into a community, as appropriate. Where this is not possible, VCC support will continue to meet the victim's ongoing recovery needs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, confirmed victims who receive a positive Conclusive Grounds decision will have an RNA completed, as it is vital that we continue to facilitate the recovery of victims of modern slavery and build upon the progress that they have made whilst in the VCC to start rebuilding their lives. If, for any reason, the recovery needs of a confirmed victim change, or the confirmed victim needs support beyond the original estimated timescales, a further RNA can be completed by the support worker to reflect this.

The safety and security of those supported through the VCC is a top priority. RNAs are being conducted remotely, where appropriate, in line with advice from Public Health England. Where there is an exceptional need that requires face to face engagement to complete the assessment, support workers will facilitate this with social distancing measures in place.

We recognise at this time that other types of suitable support which could usually be accessed to meet an individual's recovery needs, for example local authority housing, mainstream benefits, asylum support, and social services under the Care Act 2014, may have been adversely impacted by COVID-19. As part of the RNA process and when making support recommendations, support workers are considering the current

availability of alternative support services. Similarly, the Home Office are considering the wider impact of COVID-19 when making RNA decisions. Where possible, arrangements for individuals to access alternative services in line with their recovery plan should still be progressed.

In addition, regardless of whether an individual's RNA identifies a continued recovery need for accommodation support, we have taken steps to ensure that all victims currently accommodated in VCC accommodation will be able to remain where they are until at least 6 July 2020. This policy will be reviewed before the end of June in respect of the Government's latest COVID-19 advice.

■ Slavery: Victims

Carolyn Harris: [\[47357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the £1.73 million of funding for safe accommodation for victims of modern slavery announced by the Government on 2 May 2020, for what reasons potential victims under the National Referral Mechanism that are in receipt of outreach and asylum support have been notified that they will not longer receive support from that service.

Carolyn Harris: [\[47358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the £1.73 million of funding for safe accommodation for victims of modern slavery announced by the Government on 2 May 2020, whether recovery needs assessments are being undertaken to move on potential victims in National Referral Mechanism scheme.

Carolyn Harris: [\[47359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who has responsibility for (a) policy development and (b) planning for the (i) provision of victim support for people in the National Referral Mechanism during the covid-19 outbreak, (ii) allocation of resources to ensure the availability of safe and appropriate support and (iii) operational delivery of that support.

Victoria Atkins:

The safety and security of those supported through the modern slavery Victim Care Contract (VCC) is a top priority for government. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our contingency planning continues to focus on ensuring victims of modern slavery can access the essential services and support they need. We have secured £1.73 million of the funding for charities, announced by the Chancellor last month, to provide emergency support to victims of modern slavery who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

The first question makes reference to asylum services being withdrawn – it should be noted that the asylum system operates independently of the National Referral Mechanism, and therefore a negative Conclusive Grounds decision would have no immediate bearing on an individual's asylum support provision. The asylum system

would notify the individual of any subsequent decisions made in relation to their asylum support and/or asylum claim.

There are two main scenarios under which victims in outreach may be required to leave VCC support. Victims in outreach who receive a positive Conclusive Grounds will receive at least a further 45 calendar days of move-on support during which the support provider will help the victim transition out of support. The point at which a victim will be exited from VCC support will be determined through a Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) conducted in accordance with the RNA process guidance.

Victims in outreach who receive a negative Conclusive Grounds decision, determining them not to be a victim of modern slavery, receive 9 working days of move-on support. An extension request may be made where an individual requires a longer period to exit support safely and securely.

With reference to the second question, the RNA process informs tailored move on plans to help confirmed victims (those with a positive conclusive grounds decision) transition out of the VCC and back into the community where appropriate. These assessments continue to be undertaken during COVID-19. The assessment considers the availability of alternative, and often more sustainable, support services and victims only begin a move-on process if it is suitable for them to do so, in line with their recovery needs. The wider impact of Covid-19 on access to alternative services is considered when conducting the Recovery Needs Assessment.

The third question seeks clarification on policy and operational responsibility for victims of modern slavery during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Home Office is responsible for developing policy and for ensuring the development of robust contingency plans to ensure the safety of victims during this crisis. The Salvation Army, as the Prime Contractor of the VCC, has operational responsibility to ensure the delivery of these plans. We are working closely with The Salvation Army to ensure that victims are receiving the support they need, and we will continue to review policy and processes to maintain the services to victims during these uncertain times.

■ Social Distancing: Enforcement

Stuart Anderson:

[49121]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that large social gatherings in houses do not take place during the covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

Kit Malthouse:

The police have the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices where individuals are found in contravention of social distancing regulations. First time offenders may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice of £100 (reduced to £50 for early pay-ment), with fines increasing up to a maximum of £3,200 for subsequent offences. Latest data, published by NPCC on 15 May, shows a total of 13,445 FPNs have been issued

between 27 March and 11 May. In addition, 799 FPNs have been issued in Wales taking the total for England and Wales to 14,244 for the period 27 March to 11 May.

■ **Stop and Search: Coronavirus**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[52239]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the merits of officers using PPE during stop and search operations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[52240]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to police officers regarding the use of PPE during stop and search operations during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government recognises the importance of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all of those on the frontline and has published guidance on appropriate PPE for emergency workers, including the police.

The NPCC 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, including close contact with the public where social distancing is not available.

The guidance is available online here: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/COVID-19/Documents/Personal-Protective-Equipment-Operational-Guidance-1.pdf>

■ **Theft: Livestock**

Scott Mann:

[52263]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to reduce incidences of livestock theft from farmers in Cornwall.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is clear that livestock theft should be reported to the police so that it can be investigated appropriately. To ensure that Police Forces have the resources they need to deal with these crimes when they do occur, the Government has committed to increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 over the next three years. Up to 6,000 additional officers are to be recruited by the end of the financial year. The deployment of these additional officers will be a matter for the chief officer of police and the regional police and crime commissioner.

■ Travel Restrictions: Scottish Government**Mark Pritchard:****[51763]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has held with the Scottish Government on the 14 day quarantine policy for travellers returning to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

As public health matters are devolved, we have been working closely with the Devolved Administrations, including colleagues in Scotland, to build a four nations approach. This has included meetings to establish the measures to be introduced and their operation.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Mr Ben Bradshaw:****[51562]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost of preparing for the Government's proposed 14 day quarantine requirement due to the covid-19 outbreak up to 8 June 2020.

Kevin Foster:

Work associated with the design and implementation of the Government's proposed 14-day quarantine requirement, is being delivered within existing budget allocations. However, there will be additional costs associated with these new health measures, such as those relating to the development of new passenger locator form.

Work is underway to determine the additional costs; however, the Home Office does not routinely publish breakdowns of operational departmental spending. The information we do publish can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[51563]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the running costs of the Government's proposed 14 day quarantine requirement due to the covid-19 outbreak after its implementation on 8 June 2020.

Kevin Foster:

Work associated with running the Government's proposed 14-day quarantine requirement, is being delivered within existing budget allocations. However, it is expected there will be additional costs associated with maintaining these new health measures, such as those relating to accommodation.

Work is underway to determine the additional costs; however, the Home Office does not routinely publish breakdowns of operational departmental spending. The information we do publish can be found in the Annual Report and Accounts – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019>.

Henry Smith:

[\[52657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Office, what review mechanisms she will put in place to assess the (a) effectiveness of and (b) need for a 14-day quarantine period for people arriving at UK airports, ports and other points of entry.

Kevin Foster:

Public health will always come first. The government will carefully assess the impact of these measures in preventing transmission of coronavirus in the UK.

The need for the restrictions, and the requirements imposed, will be reviewed in line with social distancing measures, currently every three weeks. The first review will be in w/c 28 June.

The Government will consider factors such as SAGE advice, the domestic and international incidence of Covid-19, the level of infection and transmission, emerging scientific evidence for antibody and other screening methods being appropriate for international travel health measures, economic impact, and initiatives being trialled to secure safe travel.

■ **Treason**

Alicia Kearns:

[\[52583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her predecessor's speech on 20 May 2019, what timeframe applies to the Government's review of the Treason laws.

James Brokenshire:

The risks posed to the UK from hostile states have both grown and diversified and we have to ensure that we have the necessary powers to meet current and evolving threats to the UK, both domestically and overseas.

The Home Office is reviewing the legislation relating to hostile state activity to assess whether additional powers are required to clamp down on the activities of hostile states which threaten the UK.

The Treason Acts along with other relevant Acts are being considered as part of the Home Office's ongoing wider review of legislation. This work is ongoing and has not reached conclusions yet.

■ **UK Border Force: Recruitment**

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[54929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's blog post, Border Force recruitment, published in August 2019, how many of the Border Force officers trained for no deal will be empowered to carry out customs tasks under section 3 of the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2009; and how many of those officers will be based in (a) Scotland and (b) the rest of the UK.

Chris Philp:

Border Force resource and staffing requirements are continually reviewed, and we deploy resources flexibly as and when they are required. Border Force will continue to build a pipeline of resource to flexibly respond to future requirements.

We have already delivered a largescale recruitment and training exercise, which has seen an uplift of permanent staff, bringing the number of full-time equivalent Border Force staff to over 8,700 from c7,700 in March 2018. This includes a multi-disciplinary Readiness Task Force (RTF) of c.300 officers, which is available to deploy across the UK at short notice to deal with emerging issues and peaks in demand.

We are working closely across government to ensure we have the necessary trained staff, processes and infrastructure in place to respond to the increased custom checks from January in 2021.

■ Undocumented Migrants**Bill Wiggin:****[51639]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle criminal gangs involved in the smuggling of illegal immigrants into the UK.

James Brokenshire:

Organised criminal groups (OCGs) continue to facilitate the majority of migrant journeys to the UK. The threat we are facing from organised immigration crime spans multiple countries, nationalities and criminal methodologies.

It is complex, and we are working to tackle the criminal groups who facilitate the travel from source countries to Europe and the United Kingdom.

The migrants making the dangerous journey to Europe include illegal migrants who have paid to travel, trafficked people, as well refugees and asylum seekers. Each of these groups of individuals has very different needs in terms of our response towards them. However, in all cases we are tackling the OCGs who make profit from them all.

The UK is playing a leading role in tackling organised immigration crime and protecting UK borders is just one element of that. We work with and support our European partners to detect and pursue these OCGs as well as raising awareness of the dangerous methods they use to move migrants and the exploitation that occurs in many cases.

Preventing organised immigration crime upstream is a core objective of Immigration Enforcement. Its network of staff based in embassies and consulates in over 30 key source and transit countries carries out the following key activities:

- Working with carriers around the world to reduce the threat of inadequately documented people (IDPs) reaching the UK by air, through training and a 24/7 advice service which is staffed both locally and in the UK;
- Developing intelligence packages related to the visa or air threat for subsequent criminal investigations and prosecutions overseas and in the UK;

- Targeted capacity building programmes to improve capability of local partners to tackle immigration crime; and
- Providing intelligence support to the visa operation.

Additionally, the UK has established the Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce, which brings together officers from Border Force, the National Crime Agency, Immigration Enforcement and the Crown Prosecution Service. The Taskforce takes a “whole of route” approach to identify and tackle the groups involved in organised immigration crime, seeking to use every opportunity to disrupt them in source countries, in Europe and in the other countries migrants travel through to reach the UK. It has successfully disrupted organised crime groups involved in immigration crime through participating in intelligence development and sharing, as well as arrests and prosecutions.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to prevent unlawful migration via small boats crossing the Channel.

Chris Philp:

Keeping our border secure is the Government’s highest priority and we are committed to doing everything we can to stop these dangerous Channel crossings which are putting vulnerable lives at risk.

The Home Office liaises directly with the French Interior Ministry on addressing the issue of illegal migration, engaging at an official, diplomatic level and supported at an operational level through regular UK-French Migration Committees.

Through joint-working with France, the UK has funded the continued deployment of French law enforcement along the coast of northern France, who are patrolling constantly in order to detect attempted crossings by migrants. Funding has been allocated, among other projects, for further security improvements at ports in northern France and on the ground, which includes drones, specialist vehicles and detection equipment to stop small boats leaving European shores.

Intelligence flows are also key to dismantling the organised crime groups behind crossings. We have restructured and repurposed our approach to support to better inform and direct how and where law enforcement is deployed.

Royston Smith:

[\[52207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants have attempted to illegally cross the English Channel since the start of 2020.

Chris Philp:

People crossing the Channel to enter the UK have come from a safe country – usually France – and so there is no reason why they need to make this trip in order to claim asylum. Those fleeing persecution should stay in the first safe country they enter.

The UK continues to work closely with France and other countries to return migrants who have entered the UK by small boat in order to provide a strong deterrent against these dangerous crossings.

The number of migrants arriving in the UK crossing the Channel by small boats for the months of January to March 2020 is approx. 450. These are provisional figures based on operational management information. The figures for April have not passed through a data quality check and cannot be assured. The final figures for all months will be published at a later date, once they have been verified and fully quality assured.

It should be noted that, by definition, we cannot be certain of the total number of people attempting to cross the English Channel via clandestine means.

Royston Smith: [\[52208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants have been intercepted by Border Force whilst attempting to illegally cross the English Channel since the start of 2020.

Royston Smith: [\[52209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants have illegally crossed the English Channel since the beginning of 2020.

Royston Smith: [\[52210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many migrants who have illegally crossed into the UK by boat have been rescued by Border Force or other authorities since the beginning of 2020.

Chris Philp:

People crossing the Channel to enter the UK have come from a safe country – usually France – and so there is no reason why they need to make this trip in order to claim asylum. Those fleeing persecution should stay in the first safe country they enter.

The UK continues to work closely with France and other countries to return migrants who have entered the UK by small boat in order to provide a strong deterrent against these dangerous crossings.

The number of migrants arriving in the UK crossing the Channel by small boats for the months of January to March 2020 is approx. 450. These are provisional figures based on operational management information. The figures for April have not passed through a data quality check and cannot be assured. The final figures for all months will be published at a later date, once they have been verified and fully quality assured.

Sir John Hayes: [\[53300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent migrants from crossing the English Channel illegally.

Chris Philp:

Keeping our border secure is the Government's highest priority and we are committed to doing everything we can to stop these dangerous Channel crossings which are putting vulnerable lives at risk.

The Home Office liaises directly with the French Interior Ministry on addressing the issue of illegal migration, engaging at an official, diplomatic level and supported at an operational level through regular UK-French Migration Committees.

Through joint-working with France, the UK has funded the continued deployment of French law enforcement along the coast of northern France, who are patrolling constantly in order to detect attempted crossings by migrants. Funding has been allocated, among other projects, for further security improvements at ports in northern France and on the ground, which includes drones, specialist vehicles and detection equipment to stop small boats leaving European shores.

Intelligence flows are also key to dismantling the organised crime groups behind crossings. We have restructured and repurposed our approach to support to better inform and direct how and where law enforcement is deployed.

■ Undocumented Migrants: France**Kate Osamor:**[\[52283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, from which Government budget was funding allocated to the (a) 2015 Joint Declaration, (b) 2018 Sandhurst Agreement and (c) 2019 Joint Action Plan.

Chris Philp:

The funding which was committed under these three agreements was allocated to the Home Office budget and was provided within the financial year in which the respective agreement was signed.

This funding was utilised to implement the obligations as detailed in the agreements, including investments in improving border infrastructure at the ports of Calais and Dunkirk, the delivery of strategic communications campaigns, cooperation on return charter flights, and developing access to French asylum services.

The funding allocated under the Joint Action Plan was committed to the delivery of strategic communications campaign as well as the purchase of equipment to improve detections of boats making crossings.

■ Visas**Damien Moore:**[\[52446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to extend the automatic visa renewal to people who are working on a dependent visa.

Kevin Foster:

The automatic visa extension offer for key frontline health workers, applies to anyone subject to UK immigration control, who works in one of the defined eligible

occupations, and whose visa expires between 31 March and 1 October. It also covers immediate family members of those who are eligible.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ House of Commons: Industrial Health and Safety

Grahame Morris:

[\[54090\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the Commission has made an assessment of whether the House of Commons is exempt from workplace health and safety legislation due to Parliamentary privilege.

Pete Wishart:

Under Parliamentary privilege each House of Parliament regulates its own affairs; this includes the application of health and safety legislation. However, Parliament has also undertaken to apply the requirements of health and safety legislation and has made a commitment in the Health and Safety Policy to comply with legislation as if it applied to both Houses.

■ Parliament: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[54091\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to the Office for National Statistics report of 11 May 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by occupation, England and Wales, what assessment the Commission has made of the level of potential risk to parliamentary security and cleaning staff.

Pete Wishart:

The Commission is aware of the current evidence which shows that those from a BAME background and those who are older have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, with specific underlying conditions further increasing the risk of severe illness. The House service has a clear policy that all staff who are not business-critical do not come on to the estate; persons who are vulnerable and/or shielding are instructed to work from home. This policy applies to all staff, not just those in the security or cleaning teams.

The report issued by the Office for National Statistics discusses research findings; the Commission will review the potential risk to parliamentary security and cleaning staff as soon as the recommendations for the actions expected of a reasonable employer are issued by Public Health England, the Health and Safety Executive or other similar body.

In the interim, local and corporate Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out and measures introduced where necessary.

Grahame Morris:

[54092]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to the Office for National Statistics report of 11 May 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by occupation, England and Wales, whether risk assessments of the Parliamentary estate have incorporated input from the PCS union, which represents Parliamentary security and cleaning staff.

Pete Wishart:

The House authorities have met with representatives of the Trades Unions (including PCS) for staff in the House of Commons and PDS formally at least three times per week since the beginning of March, and with representatives of Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) and Unite as representatives of Members' staff.

All trades unions recognised by the House were provided with the opportunity to comment on the Covid-19 risk assessments.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [54141]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to Question 46042 on Parliament: Coronavirus, when the covid-19 risk assessment was carried out.

Pete Wishart:

Risk assessments in relation to Covid-19 have been carried out since March 2020. The overarching Covid-19 assessment was prepared in the weeks leading up to the date of publication referred to in question 46042. The Trades Unions were provided with an opportunity to comment ahead of it being published.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [54142]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps the Commission is taking to ensure that social distancing is observed between visitors at entry points to the parliamentary estate.

Pete Wishart:

A range of measures have been introduced at access points across the estate to support social distancing. These include the use of managed queues, booking systems, signage and the use of face coverings where it is harder to maintain social distancing e.g. during search functions.

Access to the estate has been restricted to essential business visitors only, which ensures a minimal number of visitors.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Beaches: Coronavirus****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[51890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with Public Health England on allowing the return of lifeguard cover at coastal beaches in England.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Spending time outdoors in natural spaces is important for our physical and mental wellbeing, especially during this challenging period. Our guidance on accessing green spaces safely, published on 1 June, advises how to access outdoor natural spaces safely during these times and was shared with Public Health England before its publication.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency provide guidance on managing beach safety, including undertaking risk assessments. In some circumstances, safety at public beaches, and specifically the provision of lifeguarding services, is the responsibility of the local authority who carry out risk assessments to determine appropriate safety measures.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency are supporting the National Water Safety Forum to prepare further guidance on Beach Safety for land owners and local authorities. My department will continue to work across government to support the safe operation of these outdoor spaces our communities rely on.

■ Birmingham City Council: Coronavirus**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[51805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department will meet the £112 million costs Birmingham City Council estimate they will incur in responding to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We have now made an unprecedented £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. Of this, Birmingham City Council has received £70.3 million. In total, the Government has committed over £27 billion to local areas to support councils, businesses and their communities. This also includes: £300 million to support the new test and trace service, £600 million to support providers through a new Infection Control Fund and £12.3 billion of support through the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grants. Alongside this funding, the Government has provided over £5 billion of cashflow support including the deferral of local authority payments of the Central Share of retained business rates, valued at £2.6 billion, as well as up-front payments of £1.8 billion of business rates reliefs and £850 million of social care grant.

■ Buildings: Carbon Emissions

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[51525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's proposed changes in the use of timber in construction on trends in the level of carbon emissions.

Christopher Pincher:

Timber is a way of ensuring the long-term storage of carbon where it can be used safely in buildings.

The consultation following the review of the ban on the use of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings closed on 25 May 2020 and we are now analysing the results of the consultation. As part of the next step of the development of the policy, we will produce a detailed impact assessment. No specific assessment of the effect of the proposed changes on trends in the level of carbon emissions has been made.

However, we published an impact assessment when the original ban was first introduced. This document is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ban-on-combustible-materials-in-external-wall-systems-impact-assessment>

■ Coronavirus: Wolverhampton

Stuart Anderson:

[52495]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government will take to support economic growth in Wolverhampton after the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has announced a package of support for businesses to help with their ongoing business costs in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. This includes the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, which as of 31 May, have paid out £38.3 million to 3,388 businesses and the recently announced Discretionary Grant Fund which will help support businesses who have fallen between support programmes at this difficult time by providing an additional £2,301,000.

Wolverhampton City Council will shortly be receiving £234,000 towards supporting their local high street get safely back to business and preparing for the reopening of non-essential retail. This is in addition to Wolverhampton being selected as one of the 100 places who are able to bid for investment from the £3.6 billion Towns Fund with the aim of driving the economic regeneration of places to deliver long term economic and productivity growth, and the shortlisting of the city for the Future High Streets Fund, with the aim of supporting transformative and structural changes to overcome challenges on our high streets. The Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund will

have an important role to play in supporting economic recovery as we move beyond the immediate crisis.

Across the Black Country, £217.75 million growth deal funding continues to support the delivery of projects aimed at job creation and growth which will be even more important as we move towards recovery of the economy and aims to create up to 5,000 jobs, delivering 1,400 new homes and generating up to £310 million in public and private investment. We continue to work closely with the Mayor for the West Midlands and other local partners to understand the impact of Covid-19 on local economies and how we can best support recovery and renewal.

■ Council Tax: Debt Collection

Catherine West:

[\[52304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to ensure that people falling behind on council tax payments as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak do not face bailiff action once the pause on bailiff visits is lifted.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government expects authorities to be sympathetic to those in genuine hardship and proportionate in their use of any enforcement action. Local council tax support schemes provide assistance to those on low income and the Government has provided a £500 million hardship fund to further reduce the bills of those households in receipt of working age council tax support.

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment he has made of the complexity of the application process for the (a) Domestic abuse safe accommodation: Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund and (ii) Coronavirus Small Business Grant Fund; and what steps his Department is taking to enable specialist domestic abuse services to respond flexibly to the priorities they identify during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

My Department has not made a comparative assessment of the complexity of the application process as these two funds are very different. The Small Business Grants Fund is administered by local authorities on the Government's behalf with entitlement based on eligibility for business rates relief. Some local authorities were able to pay businesses directly, whilst others used simple forms to collect the information they needed to make payments.

The domestic abuse safe accommodation emergency fund was open to all safe accommodation charities to apply directly to MHCLG through a simple open competitive bidding process. We worked with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to ensure the application process was as quick and straightforward as possible while

still enabling a robust assessment and ensuring value for public money. Asking local authorities to administer was not considered the best option as not all safe accommodation charities are commissioned by local authorities.

The funding will enable safe accommodation charities to maintain existing services as well as respond flexibly to specific pressures arising from Covid-19

■ Electricity Interconnectors: Portsmouth

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the (a) covid-19 social distancing measures prohibiting public gatherings and (b) decision by the planning inspectorate to continue the application for the AQUIND Interconnector in Portsmouth during the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of Portsmouth residents to apply scrutiny to the planning process for that interconnector.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps is he taking to ensure that adequate scrutiny in respect of the planning process for the AQUIND Interconnector in Portsmouth take place during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of delaying the consideration of plans for the AQUIND Interconnector until the covid-19 lockdown measures have been lifted to enable Portsmouth residents to scrutinise that process.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning system has a vital role to play in supporting the United Kingdom's economic recovery and it should continue to operate effectively during the Covid-19 emergency while adhering to the Government's guidance on social distancing. A written ministerial statement (*Virtual working and planning – Responding to Covid-19 Restrictions*, 13 May 2020 (HCWS235)) by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government made clear that moving to digital events and processes will be critical and that these can be put in place in the vast majority of cases to allow for the participation of all parties.

The Government fully supports the Planning Inspectorate's programme for moving to digital events and it expects such events to be taking place virtually by mid-June, other than in exceptional circumstances. The method by which hearings and events are conducted is a matter for the Inspectorate, operating in accordance with their legal obligations.

The preliminary meeting for the AQUIND Interconnector was postponed on 11 May to allow more time for appropriate measures to be put in place to ensure compliance with social distancing measures. The Inspectorate has requested further information

from participants to ensure that the views of interested parties are considered when setting the format for the preliminary meeting and future hearings.

The Government expects everyone involved in the planning process to engage proactively and the Inspectorate published guidance on 28 May 2020 on how interested parties and members of the public can participate in the examination process, including viewing documents online and attending virtual hearings. This guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance>.

■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Mike Amesbury:

[55023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's publication entitled, Building Safety Update: Monthly Data Release - April 2020, how many of the 307 buildings yet to be remediated are expected to complete remediation by June 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

It is important to recognise that remediation work cannot be done overnight – and it must be done properly so that it makes buildings and residents safe. The time to complete works varies considerably depending on factors such as structure, extent of cladding, and existing fire safety systems. For many buildings this is a complex job involving major construction work.

It remains our priority to ensure that this is done swiftly. The £600 million the Government has committed towards unsafe ACM remediation removes the biggest blocker to progress. We have also put in place additional project management support with construction expertise to help support individual projects and oversee remediation. Where building owners are failing to make acceptable progress, those responsible should expect further action to be taken – including naming and shaming and tougher enforcement action by local authorities and Fire and Rescue Services.

■ Homelessness

Rachael Maskell:

[54946]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to local authorities to ensure that people who are homeless are supported into housing.

Luke Hall:

We recognise the challenges that local authorities may face in providing accommodation as they fulfil their homelessness duties, especially during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. To support local authorities effectively, the funding for 2020/21 includes:

- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of £200 million which seeks to help local authorities plan and respond to their local homelessness pressures; and

- £63 million Homelessness Reduction Grant to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act enabling local authorities to do more to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas.

This is in addition to the £160 million allocation for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Project, which seeks to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during the Covid-19 pandemic and the £112 million Rough Sleeping Initiative fund. This fund is designed to support the establishment or enhancement of coordinated local services for rough sleepers, or those at risk of sleeping rough.

To enable local authorities to respond to Covid-19 pressures specifically, we have made over £3.2 billion of additional funding available for their response across the services they deliver including helping homeless people. This is in addition to £3.2 million targeted funding to ensure that we minimise the risk to those rough sleepers currently unable to self-isolate.

Additionally, in April 2020 the Government increased the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants to the 30th percentile of market rents. This will mean it will be easier for local authorities to fulfil their homelessness duties by assisting people to find suitable and affordable accommodation in the private rented sector.

■ Homelessness: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[52650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to reduce homelessness after the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

Almost 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown period, according to returns from local authorities to MHCLG.

This is a truly remarkable achievement and to build on this considerable success, Dame Louise Casey will spearhead a Taskforce to lead the next phase of the Government's support for rough sleepers during this pandemic. The Taskforce has one overriding objective: to ensure that as many people as possible who have been brought in off the streets in this pandemic do not return to the streets.

The Secretary of State has also announced plans for thousands of long-term, safe homes to support many of the vulnerable rough sleepers who have been supported during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are supporting those at wider risk of homelessness, with an injection of £6.5 billion into the welfare system. This includes increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents.

The Government has also introduced a package of measures to protect renters affected by Covid-19. With these emergency measures in force, no renter in either social or private accommodation will be forced out of their home.

■ Housing Associations: Greater London

Mike Amesbury:

[\[52424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of G15 research findings that major London housing associations will deliver up to 3,600 fewer affordable homes a year if the Government implements its First Homes policy.

Christopher Pincher:

Polling shows that 88 per cent of people would choose to own their own home given a free choice. This Government is taking action through First Homes to ensure that young people can get on the housing ladder and fulfil the dream of home ownership.

The Government is also committed to increasing the supply of social housing and has made £9 billion available through the Affordable Homes Programme to March 2022 to deliver approximately 250,000 new affordable homes in a wide range of tenures, including Social Rent, Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy. Building on this, we announced at Budget 2020 that we are investing £12 billion to build affordable homes between 2021/22 and 2025/26. This will be the biggest cash investment in affordable housing for a decade.

We welcome the contribution of housing associations to the consultation. We are currently analysing their responses alongside other stakeholders and will issue a Government response in due course.

■ Housing: Construction

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will seek to amend planning rules to encourage the building of homes with gardens in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages local planning policies and decisions to ensure developments create places that promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. The supporting National Design Guide recognises that well-designed shared and private amenity space, including gardens, can promote quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings, and are flexible to adapt to the changing needs of their users over time.

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[52201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to use the Home Building Fund and land owned by Homes

England to diversify the house building sector and support micro and small to medium-sized house builders.

Christopher Pincher:

Continuing to build the homes the country needs is a priority for the Government and we recognise the important role that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play in delivering new homes. We have been supporting the sector through various measures to boost confidence and retain capacity. £2.5 billion of the £4.5 billion Home Building Fund is targeted at SME builders and innovators and helps viable development schemes progress. The Home Building Fund encourages greater innovation, improves market resilience and diversifies housing delivery by enabling SMEs to increase their output.

■ **Housing: Coronavirus**

Helen Hayes:

[\[54976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that accessible housing for older and disabled people remains a priority in light of the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

Government is committed to delivering accessible homes for older and disabled people, and this remains important during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example on 27 May we paid £505 million in Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to local authorities to fund home adaptations that will help older and disabled people live independently and safely at home for longer. We will also consult shortly on various options to raise the accessibility of new homes.

■ **Housing: Insulation**

Mike Amesbury:

[\[52425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State of 18 May 2020 to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, what plans his Department has to collect data on the cost of waking watches and other interim safety measures for leaseholders waiting for (a) ACM cladding and (b) non-ACM cladding to be removed.

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 for buildings that currently have them in place. This includes ensuring that waking watch costs are transparent so that leaseholders and others who commission these services can ensure that costs are reasonable. As part of the review he will consider available cost data and engage with those that commission and pay for these services.

Housing: Standards

Helen Hayes: [54977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to consult on mandating optional access standards.

Christopher Pincher:

Government plans to consult shortly on various options to raise the accessibility of new homes. This will include consideration of how optional technical standards for accessible and adaptable homes and for wheelchair user homes are currently used.

Leasehold

Justin Madders: [52113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many times he has met with (a) representatives of leaseholders and (b) leaseholders in 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

Ministers meet a range of stakeholders, details of which are published quarterly. Details for Jan-Mar 2020 are due to be published in June (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dclg-ministerial-data>) Ministers have met leaseholders and members of the Leasehold and Commonhold APPG on leasehold and building safety issues this year.

Local Government: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [52174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he will determine how much funding in addition to that announced on 18 April 2020 will be made available to each local authority to respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We have 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. 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, including upper and lower tier authorities, have the resources they need to support their communities through this challenging time.

In total, the Government has committed over £27 billion to local areas to support councils and their communities. This also includes: £300 million to support the new test and trace service, £600 million to support providers through a new Infection Control Fund and £12.3 billion of support through the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grants.

Alongside this funding, the Government has provided over £5 billion of cashflow support including the deferral of local authority payments of the Central Share of

retained business rates, valued at £2.6 billion, as well as up-front payments of £1.8 billion of business rates reliefs and £850 million of social care grant.

We will continue to work with local government and their representatives over the coming weeks to ensure they are managing as the pandemic progresses.

■ **Playgrounds: Coronavirus**

Catherine West:

[52303]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to allow the reopening of outside play areas that have been closed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Many outdoor recreational areas, including outdoor play areas, remain closed as there is a higher risk of close contact and people touching surfaces. Over the coming months, the Government will introduce a range of adjustments to current social distancing controls, timing these carefully according to both the current spread of the virus and the Government's ability to ensure safety. These will happen in "steps" with strict conditions to safely move from each step to the next. The Government will monitor closely the effects of each adjustment, using this to inform next steps. The Government's roadmap to recovery can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>.

Any changes to rules in relation to outdoor play areas will be widely communicated.

■ **Property Development: Isle of Dogs**

Mike Amesbury:

[52434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department made of the potential financial effect on Tower Hamlets Council of his decision to grant planning permission for the Westferry Printworks site (235 Westferry Road, London E14 3QS) (PA/18/01877/A1) before that Council's new Community Infrastructure Levy was adopted.

Mike Amesbury:

[52435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he received the planning inspector's report on the Westferry Printworks site, reference PA/18/01877/A1.

Mike Amesbury:

[52437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the correspondence relating to his decision to grant planning permission for the former Westferry Printworks site (235 Westferry Road, London E14 3QS) (PA/18/01877/A1).

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Questions UIN 53442 on 8 June 2020.

Mike Amesbury:[\[52436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether (a) he (b) his advisors and (c) his officials had contact with the Westferry Printworks site developers after his Department received the Planning Inspector's report on that development.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to Question UIN 52427 on 4 June 2020.

■ Property Development: Rural Areas**Christian Wakeford:**[\[52643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to protect the green belt and countryside from social and environmental damage cause by over-development.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework provides strong protections for the Green Belt. If a local authority proposes to release Green Belt land for development, the 'exceptional circumstances' test requires evidenced justification that it has examined all other reasonable options for meeting its development needs. The Framework also expects that, where the Green Belt has to be de-designated, there should be improvements to the quality of the environment in the remaining Green Belt. Additionally, the Framework encourages local authorities to prioritise brownfield land wherever practicable.

■ Public Lavatories: Coronavirus**Selaine Saxby:**[\[52625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what further financial support will be provided to local authorities to enable them to open toilet blocks after the additional cleaning required as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We have 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

The additional funding is un-ringfenced and can be used across all local services facing pressures, recognising local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major Covid-19 service pressures in their local area.

■ Regeneration: Urban Areas

Christian Wakeford:

[52644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has for regenerating high streets when lockdown restrictions are lifted after the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Government appreciates that all high streets, big or small, are a crucial part of our communities and local economies, creating jobs, nurturing small businesses and injecting billions of pounds into our economy. We want to see fruitful hubs where people live, shop, use services, and spend their leisure time, and that includes a welcoming and safe night-time economy.

Government recognises that this is a challenging time for everyone in the country and Covid-19 is having a significant impact on our high streets and town centres. That is why we have provided a £330 billion package of support for businesses in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. This support builds on an ongoing programme of initiatives put in place to support our high streets and town centres in the long term, including:

- An accelerated £1 billion Future High Streets Fund as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund to support local areas in England to renew and reshape town centres and high streets;
- The High Streets Task Force, supporting local leaders in their work revitalising their high streets and town centres by providing proactive support to local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and connect local areas to relevant experts;
- Permitted development rights to support change of use on the high street.

On 25 May, Government announced a new £50 million fund, *Reopening High Streets Safely Fund*. Councils across England will share the additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. The money will allow local authorities to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets. Expenditure for reimbursement under this grant will be eligible from 1 June 2020 and the project will run to the end of March 2021. This funding comes on top of the Government's comprehensive package of support for business and workers during the economic emergency.

■ Regional Planning and Development: North of England

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [51990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to create a statutory body to regulate the Northern Powerhouse.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Following the Prime Minister's speech at the Northern Powerhouse Summit last year in Rotherham, the Government is going to work with leaders across the North, including mayors and local businesses, to create a new, stronger Northern Powerhouse growth body, which will have a vital role in championing investment and opportunity for the North

This Government is considering functions for pan-regional partnerships that recognise and respect what Mayors lead but go beyond that which demand and benefit from a pan-regional geography. This can include issues cut across multiple functional economic areas (FEAs) in order to deliver, where there are major economic opportunities and where benefits can be gained internationally.

Religious Buildings: Coronavirus**Afzal Khan:**[\[55024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 52458 on Religious Buildings: Coronavirus, what steps he is taking to discuss with (a) the Muslim Council of Britain and (b) other major Muslim organisations on the safe re-opening of Mosques.

Luke Hall:

We are currently engaging a broad range of faith communities to discuss the safe re-opening of places of worship through the Places of Worship Taskforce which includes representation from the Muslim community. We currently have no plans to engage with the Muslim Council of Britain.

Afzal Khan:[\[55025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 52457 on Religious Buildings: Coronavirus, what steps he has taken to translate Government guidance into other languages.

Luke Hall:

New guidance will be published shortly to ensure the limited reopening of places of worship can be done safely and in line with social distancing guidelines. The Government is currently considering how best to publish this guidance so it reaches the widest possible audience.

Rented Housing: Coronavirus**Munira Wilson:**[\[52529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that tenants who have not been financially affected by the covid-19 outbreak continue to pay rent.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has published relevant guidance for landlords and tenants during the period affected by the Covid-19 outbreak which is available on the GOV.uk

website. This guidance makes clear that tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms in their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability, and that rent levels agreed in the tenancy agreement remain legally due.

The Government has introduced an unprecedented financial support package to help renters continue to pay their living costs, including rent, during the period affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. 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. If a tenant's ability to pay rent is affected during this period, tenants should speak to their landlord at the earliest opportunity.

■ Rough Sleeping

Rachael Maskell:

[54945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department provides to the Housing First in England project; and what steps he is taking to ensure that homeless people are not returned to the streets after the lockdown restrictions are lifted after the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

Housing First has an impressive international record in helping people with complex needs to recover and stay off the streets for good, which is why we awarded £28 million to pilot it in three urban areas with contrasting challenges (the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region). The pilot aims to support around 1,000 of our most vulnerable people off the streets and into safe and secure homes.

Each individual has access to critical wrap-around support including mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse support. Since its launch, our expert advisers have been working closely with each of the three pilot regions to closely monitor and support progress.

In response to Covid-19 we have established a Taskforce to lead the next phase of the Government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic. The Taskforce is spearheaded by Dame Louise Casey and supported by expert advisers with extensive experience in supporting the most vulnerable in society. The Taskforce is already working closely with local authorities and agencies from across the homelessness sector, businesses, faith groups, local communities and charities, as well as across central government.

On 24 May, we announced radical plans to provide thousands of long-term, safe homes for vulnerable rough sleepers taken off the streets during this pandemic. This ambitious commitment will be backed by £160 million in 2020/21, to inject 3,300 new units of accommodation this year, part of 6,000 in total.

■ Temporary Accommodation

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[54992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for local authorities to provide emergency accommodation for people with nowhere safe to stay in the next twelve months.

Luke Hall:

The Government is committed to supporting those who are most vulnerable both during this pandemic and beyond. As the pandemic progressed, we provided councils across England with £3.2 billion to manage the impacts of Covid-19, including supporting homeless people.

In addition, we are providing £606 million in 20/21 to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. This marks a £238 million increase in funding from the previous year.

On 24 May, the Secretary of State announced plans for thousands of long-term, safe homes to support many of the vulnerable rough sleepers who have been supported during the Covid-19 pandemic. This unprecedented commitment – the biggest of its kind since the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative began – will be backed by £160 million in 20/21 to inject 3,300 new units of accommodation over the next 12 months, part of 6,000 in total.

The plans are being coordinated by the Rough Sleeping Taskforce, led by Dame Louise Casey. This work will bring together local councils, charities, public sector partners and businesses, leading the next phase of the Government's support for rough sleepers during the pandemic.

■ West Ham Cemetery: Coronavirus

Sir David Amess:

[\[51515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received on the reopening of West Ham Cemetery to the general public.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Secretary of State has not received any representations on this matter.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ CDC: Hospitals

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[54991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2020 to Question 40722, on CDC Group: Hospitals, what the total value was of (a) initial and (b) current investments into those hospitals.

James Duddridge:

The value of the CDC investments listed in answer to Parliamentary Question 40722 was \$190 million at the time of submitting that answer. The value of investments fluctuates during the period over which they are held by CDC. As a result of the disruption caused by the current pandemic across global markets, market volatility is particularly high at present. The last available valuation for the above investments is \$196 million.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[53621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which charities and NGOs have received Official Development Assistance to help tackle covid-19 in the global south; what funding each of those charities and NGOs received; and what facility they received it through.

Wendy Morton:

NGOs are key policy and delivery partners for DFID and we are committed to working with the sector to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19. CSOs including NGOs and charities deliver roughly one quarter of DFID programmes around the world. A total of 40 charities and NGOs are receiving funding from the Department for International Development's (DFID) £20 million humanitarian support package, announced in April, or the £100 million global hygiene partnership with Unilever, unveiled in March.

DFID is providing £24.4 million as part of our Unilever partnership to Action Aid, The African Medical and Research Foundation, PSI, Save the Children, Oxfam, WaterAid, International Rescue Committee, World Vision, Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor.

Through DFID's Rapid Response Facility, £18 million of DFID funding is supporting Action Against Hunger, CARE, Christian Aid, GOAL, Humanity & Inclusion and Norwegian Refugee Council to provide healthcare, water and sanitation, food and shelter to meet the basic needs of some of the world's most vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis.

Through the Humanitarian 2 Humanitarian network and its host Danish Refugee Council, £2 million of DFID funding will support 14 partners to manage information on the virus and share this with global partners, and to communicate facts to communities across Africa, the Middle East and beyond. These partners are: Fondation Hironnelle, Ground Truth Solutions, the New Humanitarian, CDAC Network, ACAPS, CartONG, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap, Map Action, Evidence Aid, Sphere, Red R UK, Humanitarian Academy for Development, Atlas Logistique and Insecurity Insight.

In country a significant proportion of existing DFID programmes are implemented directly through NGO partners and we expect NGOs will play a significant role in our country level COVID response. Many NGOs will also receive funding as part of

DFID's significant investment in the multilateral response to COVID-19. Collating the full list of organisations in receipt of funding for COVID-19 work from existing programmes or as downstream partners would take a disproportionate amount of time to extract.

■ Diseases: Children

Zarah Sultana:

[\[55051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of progress on her Department's development objectives in relation to building resilience against common diseases to tackle preventable child deaths.

Wendy Morton:

The direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 will affect countries' health systems and threaten past progress in tackling the common diseases that contribute to the preventable deaths of children. In October 2019, the UK Government committed to work with others to end preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children by 2030. This will help countries mitigate the indirect impacts of COVID-19 and support their recovery and future preparedness. This includes maintaining essential health services through our bilateral country programmes and multilateral investments and working to strengthen health systems in the poorest countries.

The UK hosted the Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June and raised \$8.8 billion for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance's, next five years (2021-2025) of work, which includes the UK's pledge of £1.65 billion. Using these vital funds, GAVI will immunise a further 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives against vaccine preventable diseases.

■ G7: Health Services

Zarah Sultana:

[\[55048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department has identified strengthening health systems as one of its objectives for the UK's G7 presidency in 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The Department for International Development is working with other government departments to define the objectives for the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021. These objectives will be shared in due course. Investing in strengthening health systems is a priority for the Department's work on global health and at the core of our existing global health programmes, our response to COVID-19, and our focus on ending the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children.

■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[53622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what additional budget allocations her Department has made to individual country offices since March 2020 to

support the covid-19 response; and what proportion of that additional funding has been allocated to (a) local and (b) international NGOs, by country.

Wendy Morton:

Since March 2020 there have been no additional budget allocations to individual country offices, but we have adapted over one hundred existing bilateral 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. For some programmes this included moving funding from programme components less relevant to the COVID-19 response to increase funding to those that are most in need. Many of these programmes are delivered in part or wholly through NGOs.

We have committed up to £764 million of UK aid to combat COVID-19 and to reinforce the global effort to find a vaccine. £296 million of this has been provided to support the global health response and vulnerable countries. This includes support to UK charities and international organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries.

■ **Overseas Aid: Malnutrition**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[55050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will make it her policy to pledge £800 million a year from 2021 to 2025 for tackling malnutrition at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Tokyo, December 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to preventing and treating malnutrition as part of our pledge to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children. Addressing malnutrition is also important as developing countries experience the impacts of COVID-19. We will provide an update on our nutrition commitments after 2020 in due course.

■ **UN Population Fund: Coronavirus**

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[53627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the purpose is of the £15 million of UK aid that has been allocated to tackle the covid-19 pandemic through the UN Population Fund; when that funding will be spent; how that funding will be spent; and what guidance she has (a) issued and (b) received on the proportion of that funding which will be allocated to NGOs and civil society organisations.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government has committed £10 million of UK aid to UNFPA in support of its global COVID-19 appeal, through the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Through the appeal, UNFPA will address the needs of women and girls impacted by COVID-19, including strengthening health systems to deliver sexual and reproductive health

and gender-based violence services, and plugging gaps in the availability of SRH supplies caused by coronavirus.

It is anticipated that all funding received from both the UK Government and other donors will be fully utilised by 31 December 2020, in line with the current appeal. DFID welcomes the vital role that NGOs will continue to play in service delivery through multilaterals, and we are pleased that some UN agencies, such as UNFPA, are seeking to simplify their processes for NGO partners to help ensure funding reaches them more swiftly. We will be working with the UN and DFID's country offices to understand, improve and track eventual flows to NGOs in-country.

■ United Nations: Coronavirus

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[53625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the purpose is of the £20 million of UK aid that has been allocated to tackle the covid-19 pandemic through the UN Refugee Agency; when that funding will be spent; how that funding will be spent; and what guidance she has (a) issued and (b) received on the proportion of that funding which will be allocated to NGOs and civil society organisations.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government's funding to UNHCR is in support of its global COVID-19 appeal. Through the appeal, UNHCR will support refugees and IDPs, through scaling up of health and water, sanitation and hygiene preparedness, and response interventions.

It is anticipated that all funding received from both the UK Government and other donors will be fully utilised by 31 December 2020, in line with the current appeal. Given the global nature of this pandemic, UK funding to UNHCR's appeal is pooled with that of other donors and is therefore not earmarked for any specific implementing partner whether they be NGOs, local government etc. Given UNHCR's presence in over 130 countries, it is best placed to determine the specific needs in each country, as well as which implementing partner is best placed to deliver these needs.

However, given the important role that NGOs and civil society organisations can play in tackling COVID-19, UNHCR has undertaken a review of its existing procedures related to partnership management and issued additional internal guidance to simplify and expedite collaboration where appropriate.

My officials continue to liaise with UNHCR on all aspects of its COVID-19 response, including its work with NGOs and civil society organisations.

■ Vaccination: Children

Zarah Sultana:

[\[55049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to ensure that the most marginalised and under-served children are prioritised in future global vaccination initiatives.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud to have raised \$8.8 billion for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance at the Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June. This funding, which includes the UK's world-leading £1.65 billion pledge, will support Gavi's strategy to leave no one behind with immunisation over the next five years.

The UK's central priority for Gavi is equity. Gavi immunises nearly half of the world's children, and since 2000, has increased basic immunisation coverage levels in Gavi-supported countries from 59% to 80%. Despite increases in overall immunisation coverage levels, health systems in the poorest countries are still not reaching almost one in five children with a full course of basic vaccines.

These remaining pockets of under-immunised children are often the hardest to reach. The UK is working closely with Gavi to ensure that we remove barriers to immunisation for the most marginalised children. Gavi is working closely with its Alliance Partners, WHO and UNICEF, to adopt new strategies in-country to address gender, poverty, fragility and intra-country barriers to immunisation.

■ World Food Programme: Coronavirus**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[53626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the purpose is of the £15 million of UK aid that has been allocated to tackle the covid-19 pandemic through the World Food Programme; when that funding will be spent; how that funding will be spent; and what guidance she has (a) issued and (b) received on the proportion of that funding which will be allocated to NGOs and civil society organisations.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government's funding to the World Food Programme (WFP), is in support of its global COVID-19 appeal. WFP is setting up a platform of services to enable the health and humanitarian communities (including NGOs) to deliver support to the most vulnerable populations. So far, 39 NGOs have used WFP's cargo and passenger services.

WFP has established eight international strategic consolidation hubs to support global movement of cargo. These hubs will be connected to regional staging areas in East, West and Central Africa, Central America, Asia and the Middle East.

WFP is setting up air transport links between strategic hubs and regional staging areas to ensure the predictable and sustained movement of life-saving humanitarian and medical cargo.

WFP operates passenger air services to ensure that humanitarian and medical staff are not restricted by commercial transport closures and can reach the areas where they are most needed.

Due to the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, worldwide movement restrictions and the grounding of commercial transport systems, WFP also set up global medical evacuation services for the whole humanitarian community.

The WFP appeal is for USD \$965 million; this is 9% funded with \$85 million in confirmed contributions, of which the UK has contributed 22%.

■ World Health Organisation: Coronavirus

Wendy Chamberlain:

[53623]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the purpose is of the £65 million of UK aid that has been allocated to tackle the covid-19 pandemic through the World Health Organization; when that funding will be spent; how that funding will be spent; and what guidance she has (a) issued and (b) received on the proportion of that funding which will be allocated to NGOs and civil society organisations.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a key donor to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and have already contributed £75 million to help the organisation lead international efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end the pandemic, including: global coordination; planning for country level preparedness and response; global procurement and supply; the science and research and development agenda; and communications. This £75 million is going towards the WHO's COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) and includes £10 million to the flash WHO appeal announced in February and March 2020 and a further £65 million for the SPRP was announced in April 2020. The SPRP outlines the public health measures that need to be taken to support countries to prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Funding that is provided to countries is allocated to NGOs when and as needed based on the individual country context. This funding will be spent this calendar year. The UK's funding for the WHO is based on our assessment of the organisation's needs and we continue to keep this under review.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations are key partners for DFID in responding to the unprecedented challenges arising from COVID-19. We know that in many places NGOs will be best placed to meet the needs of those most vulnerable and at risk. CSO including NGOs and charities deliver roughly one quarter of DFID programmes around the world. A total of 40 charities and NGOs will receive funding from DFID's £20 million humanitarian support package or the £100 million global hygiene partnership with Unilever. NGOs are also receiving £24 million of extra funding through the DFID COVID-19 Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Defence and Security Organisation

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[52034]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff worked for the Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) on 1 April 2020; how many of those staff are in the export support team; and what the DSO's budget is for 2020-21.

Graham Stuart:

As of 1 April 2020, the Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) had 110 staff of which 18 worked for the Export Support Team.

DSO's budget for 2020-21 is £9,514,191.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[52663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the Defence and Security Organisation's key markets are for 2019-20; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation has identified the following key markets for 2019-20 with defence and security opportunities:

Africa

Australia

Austria

Bahrain

Bangladesh

Belgium

Canada

Central European Network (Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria)

France

Germany

India

Indonesia

Italy

Japan

Kuwait

Latin America (Columbia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Panama, Argentina, Mexico)

Malaysia

New Zealand

Netherlands

Nordic Baltic Network (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia)

Oman

Philippines

Portugal
Qatar
Republic of Korea
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Spain
Switzerland
Thailand
Turkey
United Arab Emirates
United States of America

■ **Riot Control Weapons: USA**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[53309]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will (a) suspend exports of tear gas, rubber bullets and riot shields to the US in response to the recent steps taken by police against protestors and (ii) launch an investigation into whether British weapons were used by the US police against protestors; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and I have been sorry to see the violence that has taken place in the United States of America.

All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria ('Consolidated Criteria'). In reaching a decision, the Department for International Trade receives advice from a number of Departments including the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Together, we draw on all available information, including reports from NGOs and our diplomatic missions. The Consolidated Criteria provides a thorough risk assessment framework and requires us to think hard about the impact of exporting any equipment. These are not decisions my Department takes lightly, and we will not license the export of items where to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

Any licence granted by my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade may be subject to conditions. In addition, in line with the Consolidated Criteria, my Department is able to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require. There are currently nine extant licences that may be linked to law enforcement agencies. Six are Open Individual Export Licences ('OIELs'), which have potential end users that include law enforcement agencies. Three are Standard Individual Export Licences ('SIELs'), which have numerous potential end users that include law enforcement agencies. There are also 15 Open

General Licences ('OGLs') for which businesses can register that cover the export of anti-riot gear.

Much information is in the public domain already. We publish information on all export licences issued, refused and revoked on a quarterly and annual basis as official statistics on GOV.UK – at: gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data – and whilst data on actual exports is not required to be centrally held, the licences issued until the end of December 2019 are available.

Alison Thewliss:

[53467]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will suspend export of (a) rubber bullets and (b) tear gas to the US.

Alison Thewliss:

[53468]

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Nadia Whittome:

[53676]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she plans to pause and review her policy on UK arms and security equipment exports to the US for potential use in policing operations involving tear gas and rubber bullets.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and I have been sorry to see the violence that has taken place in the United States of America.

All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria ('Consolidated Criteria'). In reaching a decision, the Department for International Trade receives advice from a number of Departments including the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Together, we draw on all available information, including reports from NGOs and our diplomatic missions. The Consolidated Criteria provides a thorough risk assessment framework and requires us to think hard about the impact of exporting any equipment. These are not decisions my Department takes lightly, and we will not license the export of items where to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

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Patrick Grady:

[54129]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that (a) tear gas, (b) riot shields and (c) rubber bullets produced in and sold by companies based in the UK to law enforcement agencies in the US are not used against peaceful civilian protesters in that country.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade and I have been sorry to see the violence that has taken place in the United States of America.

All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria ('Consolidated Criteria'). In reaching a decision, the Department for International Trade receives advice from a number of Departments including the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Together, we draw on all available information, including reports from NGOs and our diplomatic missions. The Consolidated Criteria provides a thorough risk assessment framework and requires us to think hard about the impact of exporting any equipment. These are not decisions my Department takes lightly, and we will not license the export of items where to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

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■ Trade Agreements: Israel

Andrew Percy:

[51842]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in the Israeli government on a UK-Israel free trade deal.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement was signed on 18th February 2019. This Agreement will enter into force at the end of the Transition Period on 1st January 2021 and will allow businesses to trade as freely as they do now, without additional tariffs or barriers.

Total trade between the United Kingdom and Israel increased by 15 per cent in 2019 to £5.1bn. We value this trade relationship and are committed to strengthening it, so we will seek to work with counterparts in the new Israeli government to host a bilateral trade and investment summit in London.

■ Trade Agreements: USA**Gareth Thomas:****[51544]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the first round of negotiations for a UK-US Free Trade Agreement that took place between 5 May and 15 May 2020, if she will publish the text proposals for consideration by the US States tabled by the Government; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

As part of the UK-US Free Trade Agreement negotiation process, the negotiating teams are required to exchange information. As is standard practice, letters from the UK Chief Negotiator, Oliver Griffiths, and Assistant USTR, Daniel Mullaney, pertaining to the handling of information and other facets of the negotiation, and agreed by both negotiating teams, have been exchanged. These letters can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exchanging-information-during-uk-us-trade-agreement-negotiations>

■ Trade Promotion**Andrew Percy:****[51846]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to promote Yorkshire and Lincolnshire based businesses and produce in international markets.

Graham Stuart:

Businesses across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire have access to Department for International Trade (DIT) support through International Trade Advisers, HM Trade Commissioners and their teams overseas, the GREAT digital export services hub and UK Export Finance. Our trade missions, including those centred on trade shows and exhibitions, have enabled them to showcase their products overseas and connect with live opportunities. In response to COVID-19, we are adapting our support, for example through webinars and 'virtual' trade missions. Additional funding this year will enhance our support through more trade advisers, new overseas regional champions, a new export growth programme and other activities delivered with regional partners.

JUSTICE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Dr Ben Spencer:****[902968]**

What steps his Department has taken to tackle covid-19 on the prison estate.

Lucy Frazer:

We have restricted regimes, minimised transfers between prisons and boosted staffing at the frontline and supported prisoners to maintain family ties.

Prisons are also implementing a 'compartmentalisation' strategy to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals.

Latest public health advice suggests that the measures we have been taking to tackle covid-19 have helped to limit the spread of the virus in prisons.

Carolyn Harris:

[\[902969\]](#)

What discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the location of the new residential women's centre in Wales.

Lucy Frazer:

We are working with the Welsh Government, the Secretary of State for Wales and local partners to make sure that the location of our first Residential Women's Centre (RWC) meets the needs of local women.

My officials have met with the First Minister and I have spoken with the Deputy Minister, Jane Hutt. Further meetings are planned.

Ian Lavery:

[\[902971\]](#)

What support the Government is providing to the prison estate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

We have restricted regimes, minimised transfers between prisons and boosted staffing at the frontline and supported prisoners to maintain family ties.

Prisons are also implementing a 'compartmentalisation' strategy to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals.

Latest public health advice suggests that the measures we have been taking to tackle covid-19 have helped to limit the spread of the virus in prisons.

■ **Convictions: Coronavirus**

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many convictions have been secured in England and Wales for new offences under the Coronavirus Act 2020; and how many of those offences have been successfully appealed.

Chris Philp:

National Statistics on convictions for the first and second quarter of 2020 are due for publication in August and November 2020, with detailed offence level data for the whole of 2020 planned for publication in May 2021. Our statisticians are currently considering what suitable data from court management information systems could be gathered and prioritised for quality assurance and publication before then related to Covid-19 impacts, including potentially convictions for offences under the act. They will notify users through regular statistical publications.

■ Courts and Tribunals

Caroline Lucas:

[51830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the level of the backlog in (a) courts and (b) tribunals in each of the last three months.

Chris Philp:

National Statistics on the level of outstanding work in most jurisdictions across HM Courts & Tribunals Service for the first and second quarter of 2020 are due for publication in June and September 2020 respectively. The exceptions to this are the family and civil courts.

Figures on the level of outstanding work in the largest jurisdictions across HM Courts & Tribunals Service, including the family courts, are published as monthly management information at the following link. The exception to this is the civil courts, for which figures relating to outstanding work are not currently collated because a large proportion of cases that begin are subsequently settled out of court or discontinued without HMCTS being notified. The latest figures relate to March 2020 for most jurisdictions and February for the family courts. Figures for later months will be published on the dates stated at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-courts-and-tribunals-service/about/statistics>

Caroline Lucas:

[51831]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many adjournments there have been in (a) courts and (b) tribunals since February 2020.

Chris Philp:

For the First Tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber), Social Security and Child Support, Criminal Injuries Compensation, Mental Health, and Special Educational Needs and Disability, MoJ publishes figures on adjournments as part of National Statistics, and the figures relating to the period request are due for publication later in 2020. For Magistrates' courts and Crown Courts, figures on adjournments are not collated but figures on vacated hearings in the first and second quarters of 2020 are due for publication as part of the National Statistics on criminal courts in June and September 2020 respectively. Comprehensive figures for adjournments are not held for other tribunals and the family and civil courts.

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas:

[51829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what testing and tracing measures for covid-19 (a) are in place for crown courts that are open and (b) will be in place as other courts and tribunals re-open; whether he plans for the wider opening of courts to take place after testing and tracing measures are in place; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The Department for Health and Social Care recently launched the Test and Trace service that will identify anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and encourage those who have been in close contact to self-isolate for 14-days.

Beyond this national roll out, there are no specific test and trace measures in place for crown courts that are open (a) and there are no plans to put specific measures in place as other courts and tribunals reopen (b).

Courts and Tribunals have social distancing measures in place to ensure all those who come into our buildings (including staff, the judiciary, professional court users and members of the public) can maintain a 2-metre distance from others.

Additional cleaning measures and safety and security controls are in place in court and tribunal buildings to ensure they are safe to be used.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service has also undertaken a whole organisation risk assessment to identify COVID-19 related risks in our buildings, and put in place procedures to mitigate those risks. These arrangements are kept under constant review to ensure that they continually reflect changing circumstances and current Government advice.

Our focus is now on maximising our capacity to reduce the growth and volume of our outstanding work. We are working closely with the judiciary to increase the number of hearings by further expanding our capacity for remote audio and video hearings; and ensuring that we can reopen our estate for more face to face hearings as soon as it is safe to do so.

These specific measures will be set out in due course. In the meantime, our listing priorities continue to be published on judiciary.uk and details those hearings that must still go ahead.

Matt Western:[\[52353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the backlog of court cases that has accumulated as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

Our courts and tribunals provide a vital public service and it is important that justice is delivered in a timely fashion wherever possible despite the Covid-19 outbreak. Staff, identified as key workers during this pandemic, and the judiciary, working in partnership with everyone who supports the justice system has maintained both a core justice system focussed on the most vital cases, and the safety of all courts and tribunals users in line with public health advice and guidance.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure that as far as possible the justice system continues to function. We put in place temporary changes, designed in partnership with the judiciary, to prioritise cases; rapidly expand our capacity for remote audio and video hearings [numbers] while maintaining access to open justice; and condensed our services in to 159 open court/tribunal buildings, a further 111 staffed courts being used for audio and video hearings and suspended operations in

71 sites, utilising resource and cleaning materials in those sites to bolster open and staffed courts. Jury trials have restarted in seven Crown Court centres since 18 May, including the Central Criminal Court at the Old Bailey in London, Cardiff, Bristol, Manchester Minshull Street, Reading, Warwick and Winchester.

We have rolled out home working solutions to allow as many of our staff as possible who can, to work from home performing essential functions and thus reduce or eliminate unnecessary backlogs. As at 2 June 2020, we have distributed 5,588 laptops to our staff to facilitate this. We have also commenced rolling out a Windows Virtual Devices Solution to enable other staff to temporarily work securely at home using their own IT equipment.

Our focus is now on maximising our capacity to reduce the growth and volume of our outstanding work. We are working closely with the judiciary to increase the number of hearings by further expanding our capacity for remote audio and video hearings; and ensuring that we can reopen our estate for more face to face hearings as soon as it is safe to do so. These specific measures will be set out in due course. In the meantime, our listing priorities continue to be published on judiciary.uk and details those hearings that must still go ahead.

Our commitment to continuing to deliver justice depends on close engagement and working with justice system partners, and we are grateful to all involved for the way they have embraced new and planned reform solutions to keep the wheels of justice turning.

■ Crime: Coronavirus

Darren Henry:

[\[55055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a criminal offence of deliberately infecting a person with covid-19.

Chris Philp:

The Government has no plans to introduce a specific criminal offence as offences already exist which cover such circumstances.

Threatening to infect someone with covid-19 can be charged as an assault and where a direct causal link can be established between one person's unlawful act and another person contracting the virus then other more serious offences can be charged.

Each case needs to be considered on its own specific facts.

■ Crimes of Violence: Alternatives to Prosecution

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many violent crimes in England and Wales have been disposed of by way of a community resolution order in (a) 2020 to date and (b) each of the last five years.

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many sexual crimes in England and Wales have been disposed of by way of a community resolution order in (a) 2020 to date and (b) each of the last five years.

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many weapons offences England and Wales have been disposed of by way of a community resolution order in (a) 2020 to date and (b) each of the last five years.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office publishes data on police recorded outcomes including Community Resolutions. This is available up to the year ending December 2019.

A link to the data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-statistics>

The number of recorded Community Resolution outcomes by year, grouped by offence, in England and Wales, is as follows:

	YEAR				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Offence group					
Possession of weapons offences	1082	1058	1758	2093	1644
Sexual offences	603	617	648	633	502
Violence against the person	42185	38420	36514	35054	30134

■ Debts: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham:

[\[54101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June to Question 48411 on Debts: Coronavirus, if he will publish the draft guidance on the recovery of VAT costs.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice made the draft guidance on the issue of the VAT payable on High Court Enforcement fees available to a wide range of interested parties on 13 March, including Citizens Advice, StepChange Debt Charity, CIVEA and the High Court Enforcement Officers Association. We extended the deadline for responses from 3 April to 1 May to allow more parties to comment. The Ministry of Justice is currently analysing the comments received on the draft guidance. We will publish the final guidance in due course.

Domestic Abuse: Convictions**Philip Davies:**[\[51756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the proportion of allegations of domestic abuse that are upheld in courts and result in convictions after trial.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold the data requested centrally and information could only be identified by manually searching case records at disproportionate cost. . Offences involving domestic abuse can take various forms and are prosecuted under the offence in law that best reflects their nature and circumstances, for example, harassment, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, a public order offence. These offences can take the form of domestic abuse or non-domestic abuse and data collected centrally from courts does not distinguish between the two.

Family Courts**Jerome Mayhew:**[\[52490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on the proportion of family court cases where discouraged access to the child was reported by one of the parents.

Alex Chalk:

Incidences of alleged or apparent parental alienation by either parent in relation to family proceedings about child arrangements are not recorded centrally and such information could only be obtained from individual case files at disproportionate cost.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is continuing to develop its work in addressing parental alienation when it arises in such cases. Its Child Impact Assessment Framework (CIAF) includes various tools and guidance that further support social work practitioners in identifying how individual children are experiencing parental separation, including any alienating behaviour by one parent against the other. Further information about the Framework is available on the Cafcass website at www.Cafcass.gov.uk.

Jerome Mayhew:[\[52491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the adversarial approach of the Family Courts in dealing with child access cases.

Alex Chalk:

We are committed to ensuring that the Family Courts deal with child arrangement order cases to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and their families. In May 2019 the MoJ established a panel of experts to review how the family courts handle cases involving domestic abuse and other serious offences. The panel received submissions from over 1200 individuals and organisations, many of whom had experience of the adversarial system. The panel is finalising its report and will publish findings and recommendations for next steps in the coming weeks.

Government Assistance: Coronavirus**Paul Girvan:**[\[52367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will increase sentences for people who are convicted of abusing Government support schemes during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The Government is committed to ensuring a robust response to those who exploit the covid-19 outbreak through criminal means. Sentencing in individual cases is a matter for our independent courts.

The Government continues to work alongside the CPS to provide a multi-agency response to criminality associated with covid-19. A joint interim charging protocol has been agreed between the police and CPS which gives the highest priority to custody cases and all covid-19 related cases.

Immigration**Valerie Vaz:**[\[54853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the current backlog is of cases awaiting a first tier immigration tribunal hearing.

Chris Philp:

The number of appeals in the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) that have either not had a final hearing or been resolved prior to hearing, as at 31 March 2020, is 17,661, a reduction of 4,475 appeals from the same period in 2019.

Published statistics can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2019 and

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmcts-management-information.

Judiciary: Hong Kong**Neil Coyle:**[\[54926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps the Government is taking to support the (a) independence of the judiciary in Hong Kong and (b) British judges who serve within that judicial system.

Chris Philp:

The UK Government is monitoring developments closely and remain committed to supporting the principles of the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law in Hong Kong in accordance with the obligations undertaken by the UK and China in the Joint Declaration.

Each country should uphold its own rule of law and we expect British judges who get invited to sit in Hong Kong's courts to apply law in accordance with legislation and guidance in place in that country without interference from the Executive.

Legal Aid Scheme

Mr David Lammy: [51556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications for legal aid have been made to the Legal Aid Agency in each month in 2020; and how many of those applications have been successful.

Mr David Lammy: [51557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many times the Legal Aid Agency has assessed that legal aid has been overpaid to a provider in each month in 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Information was recently released to answer PQs 42892 & 42893 for the calendar year 2019.

At the time of writing the Legal Aid Agency's most recent quarterly National Statistics publication covers up to and including the third quarter of the financial year 2019/2020. Data for January – March 2020 inclusive is scheduled to be released on 25 June 2020 at which time monthly breakdowns of the information sought will be available upon request.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legal-aid-statistics>

Magistrates: Ethnic Groups

Mr David Lammy: [51549]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many magistrates there are in England and Wales, and what proportion of magistrates are from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority background.

Chris Philp:

As at 1st April 2019, there were 14,348 magistrates in England and Wales. Approximately 12% (1,653) identified themselves as from a Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority background. This data is published in the annual Judicial Diversity Statistics.

■ Offences against Children: Criminal Proceedings

Tim Loughton:

[\[54847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many child sexual abuse criminal cases have had their court dates postponed since the beginning of the covid-19 lockdown period.

Chris Philp:

Magistrates' and Crown Court figures relating to child sexual abuse adjournments are not collated, however cases with serious safeguarding implications are being prioritised for listing by the independent judiciary. Figures on vacated trials in the first and second quarters of 2020 are due for publication as part of the National Statistics on criminal courts in June and September 2020 respectively.

■ Parking: Private Property

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[51891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of court cases in respect of the enforcement of parking disputes on private land in each of the last three years.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Personal Injury: Compensation

Andy Slaughter:

[\[51720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when he plans to publish the second part of the Government's response to the Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury (whiplash) Claims Process consultation.

Alex Chalk:

The government announced on 21 April 2020 that work related to the implementation of the whiplash reforms in the Civil Liability Act 2018, and the raising of the small claims limit for road traffic accident claims, has been paused and the implementation timetable moved to April 2021. This will enable the personal injury sector to focus on delivering their response to Covid-19, as well as allowing the government to focus on providing key justice services.

Implementing these reforms in April 2021 will remain the Government's priority. We are aware of the continued interest in the issues raised in Part 2 of the 'Reforming the Soft Tissue Injury (whiplash) Claims Process' consultation paper and will be considering our response to that consultation after the April 2021 implementation.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[51721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timeframe is for the introduction of secondary legislation in relation to the (a) increase in the small claims limit for road traffic

accident claims from £1,000 to £5,000 and (b) Government's proposed tariff structure for minor injury claims.

Alex Chalk:

The government announced on 21 April 2020, by way of Written Ministerial Statement (WMS), that all work related to the implementation of the whiplash reforms has been paused and the implementation timetable has been moved to April 2021. This will enable the personal injury sector to focus on delivering their response to Covid-19, as well as allowing the government to focus on providing key justice services.

The government will make further announcements, including on the Parliamentary timetable for the relevant Statutory Instruments, in due course. The full WMS can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/update-on-the-implementation-of-the-whiplash-reform-programme>

■ **Prison Officers: Resignations**

Mr David Lammy:

[51559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of new prison officers have left the profession within (a) one year, (b) two years and (c) three years of joining that profession.

Lucy Frazer:

Since 2016, we have recruited around 4,000 new prison officers who have worked through unprecedented challenges to protect prisoners and the public.

A larger workforce means more leavers, but we are working hard to retain staff with better pay, additional training to progress their careers, and significant investment in tools to keep them safe. All staff have access to services including 24/7 counselling, and occupational health assessments. In addition, there is work being undertaken directly with Governors to address local issues that will support experienced staff and new recruits to remain in the service.

The attached table includes proportion of Band 3-5 leavers.

Attachments:

1. Table [Table for PQ 51559.xlsx]

■ **Prison Service: Dairy Products**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[51566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of the milk and dairy products used by the Prison Service in England comes from UK producers; what steps he is taking to increase that proportion; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice prison food supply contract is used by 102 Public prisons and 3 Private prisons in England and Wales. Between April 2019 and March 2020, by

spend value, 77.1% of all milk and dairy product used was UK produced. The remainder, 22.9% was sourced from the EU.

99% of milk supplied through the contract is British produce.

The prison retail contract offers a range of milk and dairy products for prisoners to purchase. During the period of 1 March to 31 May 2020 77.9% of dairy goods were produced in the UK and 22.1% sourced from the EU.

This national food supply contract for prisons directly encourages the use of UK produce, and includes this as a key performance measure. We will continue to actively manage the contract, and all avenues for the use of UK produce will be explored.

■ Prisoners

Mr David Lammy:

[51551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners have been incarcerated across the prison estate in each year since 2000.

Lucy Frazer:

The information requested is in the table below. The table provides prison population figures taken from 30 June every year between 2000-2019 and the current prison population as of 29 May 2020.

Prison population per year from 2000 to 2020

DATE (FROM 30 TH JUNE EVERY YEAR)	PRISON POPULATION
2000	65,194
2001	66,403
2002	71,218
2003	73,657
2004	74,488
2005	76,190
2006	77,982
2007	79,734
2008	83,194
2009	83,391
2010	85,002
2011	85,374

DATE (FROM 30 TH JUNE EVERY YEAR)	PRISON POPULATION
2012	86,048
2013	83,842
2014	85,509
2015	86,193
2016	85,134
2017	85,863
2018	82,773
2019	82,710
2020 (29 May 2020)	80,032

The information from the table can be found at:

- Pre-2002 information can be found in table 8.1 on page 99 in the link below:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218140650/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb1504.pdf>
- Post-2002 information can be accessed via the link below in Table A1.1:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820163/population-30June2019-annual.ods

■ Prisoners' Release

Liz Saville Roberts:

[52292]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what criteria are used to assess the suitability of prisoners for release under the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme; how many such prisoners have been released so far, by prison, in (a) Wales and (b) England; how many such prisoners have re-offended in (i) Wales and (ii) England.

Lucy Frazer:

On 4 April, we announced the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme (ECTR). This scheme enables risk-assessed prisoners, who are within two months of their release date, to be temporarily released from custody, as part of the national approach to managing public services during this challenging period. No high-risk offenders, including those convicted of violent or sexual offences, anyone of national security concern or a danger to children, will be considered for release, nor any prisoners who have not served at least half their custodial term.

Guidance, including eligibility criteria for ECTR was published on 24 April and can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881061/end-custody-temporary-release.pdf.

As at Friday 29 May, 95 prisoners have been released under this scheme – 79 from prisons in England and 16 from prisons in Wales.

As at Friday 29 May, 2 of these prisoners have been recalled to custody for alleged further offences, both had been released from Welsh prisons.

The tables below provide a breakdown of the number of prisoners released under ECTR by prison in England and Wales, the data is correct as of Friday 29 May.

England

ASKHAM GRANGE (HMP & YOI)	#
BIRMINGHAM (HMP)	#
BRINSFORD (HMP)	#
BRONZEFIELD (HMP)	#
BULLINGDON (HMP)	#
CHANNINGS WOOD (HMP)	#
DOWNVIEW (HMP)	#
EAST SUTTON PARK (HMP & YOI)	#
EASTWOOD PARK (HMP)	#
FELTHAM (HMP & YOI)	#
FORD (HMP)	6
HATFIELD (HMP & YOI)	#
HIGH DOWN (HMP)	#
HIGHPOINT (HMP)	#
HOLLESLEY BAY (HMP)	4
HOLME HOUSE (HMP)	#
HULL (HMP)	#
HUMBER (HMP)	#
ISIS HMP/YOI	4
KIRKHAM (HMP)	5
KIRKLEVINGTON GRANGE (HMP)	5

ASKHAM GRANGE (HMP & YOI)	#
MOORLAND (HMP & YOI)	#
NORWICH (HMP & YOI)	#
OAKWOOD (HMP)	#
PENTONVILLE (HMP)	#
PETERBOROUGH (HMP)	#
RANBY (HMP)	5
RISLEY (HMP)	4
ROCHESTER (HMP & YOI)	#
SPRING HILL (HMP)	#
STANDFORD HILL (HMP)	5
SUDBURY (HMP & YOI)	4
THE MOUNT (HMP)	#
WANDSWORTH (HMP)	#
WORMWOOD SCRUBS (HMP)	#
Total	79

Wales

BERWYN (HMP)	#
CARDIFF (HMP)	#
PARC (HMP)	5
PRESCOED (HMP & YOI)	6
SWANSEA (HMP)	#
Total	16

The symbol # denotes suppressed values of 3 or fewer to avoid the risk of identifying individuals.

■ Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[51813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken with Birmingham City Council to ensure that local officials are included in discussions on the protocols, processes and monitoring of any resettlement of prisoners on early release as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[51814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what safeguards his Department has put in place to ensure adequacy of the provision of local public services in Birmingham as a result of the early release of prisoners during the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

In response to the current unprecedented emergency, over recent weeks the Government has released on temporary licence a small number of risk-assessed prisoners who are already within two months of their release date as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) works closely with a number of partners to check suitability for release. This includes working with policing colleagues to ensure local forces are notified of an offender's proposed release and inviting them to provide any additional information regarding risk surrounding an individual's release.

In this instance, senior probation staff in Birmingham have confirmed they are engaging with local partners, including the local authority, West Midlands Combined Authority and the office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

No offender will be released without housing and healthcare support in place to ensure the impact on local public services is minimised. HMPPS have set up seven Homelessness Prevention Taskforces, including in the Midlands, to coordinate the sourcing of accommodation for those offenders released early. We have also implemented a process for the voluntary sector to match offers of support services for released individuals.

■ Prisoners' Release: Electronic Tagging

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much the 2,000 electronic tags cost for the End of Custody Temporary Release scheme.

Lucy Frazer:

In March, prisons were facing a significant challenge to minimise the impact of COVID-19 due to offenders living in close proximity and typically sharing cells. Without action, Public Health England (PHE) expected the infection curve would occur faster in prisons than in the general population and subsequently create earlier demand for hospital intervention. PHE advised that action was necessary to avoid thousands of prisoners, including children in custody, becoming infected and overwhelming local NHS services. Given the unpredictable nature of the situation, a

range of measures were introduced to provide a variety of tools that could be used to a greater or lesser extent depending on how the outbreak developed.

The early release schemes were one element of that approach to containing the spread of the virus in prisons. We have also worked to reduce numbers on remand, created extra cells, limited prisoner movements and jails have implemented 'compartmentalisation', meaning staff have isolated those prisoners with symptoms, shielded the vulnerable and quarantined new arrivals. These measures have helped to contain the spread of the virus and limit deaths significantly, compared to initial estimates.

In considering early releases, the priority of HM Prison and Probation Service has been to put the safety of the public first which is why offenders must meet strict eligibility criteria and pass a risk assessment to be released early.

Our upper estimate for the number of prisoners eligible was 4,000, based solely on the sentences that prisoners were serving. Electronic monitoring is a fundamental part of the scheme which helps us to ensure public safety so it is essential that we had tags available for every prisoner released early. This is why we acquired 2,000 electronic monitoring tags at a cost of £3,775,000.

Releases under the scheme continue and we are considering alternative uses for tags elsewhere in the criminal justice system in support of our ambition to make full use of the benefits of electronic monitoring technology.

■ Prisoners: Crimes of Violence

Mr David Lammy:

[51560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were reported of violence committed by prisoners against prison staff in each month of (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 to date.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of cases of reported violence committed by prisoners against prison staff in each month are published as part of the Safety in Custody statistics, a summary of the figures for 2019 is provided below:

January – 835

February – 841

March – 863

April – 868

May – 894

June – 855

July – 857

August – 834

September – 771

October – 844

November – 763

December – 770

These figures have been drawn from the HMPPS Incident Reporting System. Care is taken when processing and analysing the returns but the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. Although the figures are shown to the last individual the figures may not be accurate to that level.

The figures for January to March 2020 are not yet available and will be published on July 30th.

Our prison staff work incredibly hard, and we do not underestimate the challenges they face. We will continue to work with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to ensure prosecutions of those who assault them. We also provide post incident care teams, occupational health support and counselling for those who need it.

■ Prisoners: Education

Mr David Lammy:

[\[51558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what access prisoners have to educational resources during the lockdown due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

In accordance with advice from Public Health England (PHE) and in order to keep all staff and prisoners safe, temporary measures have been introduced during the pandemic to restrict prison regimes and cease all non-essential activities involving groups of people. This includes education.

We are, however, investing in measures to improve the time prisoners are spending in their cells, support family contact, and incentivise good behaviour. We have worked collaboratively with our Prison Education Framework (PEF) and Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) providers to develop and provide learning materials, in cell activity packs and learning packs for as many prisoners as possible. We continue to work with local providers on the development and delivery of additional support materials to meet new and emerging needs.

In Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) the pandemic has meant the schedule of daily activities in establishments has had to be adjusted to minimise infection risk and protect children and staff. Education is currently being delivered in small groups in Secure Children's Homes (SCHs), Oakhill STC, and Parc YOI, whilst adhering to physical distancing principles - and through provision and assessment education packs for those in other establishments.

The latest National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services was released on 2 June and provides a conditional roadmap towards how prisons will operate whilst COVID-19 remains a threat. Where certain activities can resume such as education services, we should expect them to do so with considerable restrictions and adaptations in the interests of safety, although we will look for innovative ways to

deliver them. The Framework was published on GOV.UK and can be accessed via the following link;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>

■ Prisoners: Telephones

Ms Lyn Brown: [51782]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of prisoners had telephone contact with (a) drug and alcohol abuse, (b) additional mental health, (c) employment, (d) education and training, (e) resettlement preparation and (f) other types of support worker during the week of 20 May 2020.

Ms Lyn Brown: [51784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling support workers to call into prisons that have in-cell telephones to maintain relationships and progress with the prisoners they work with (a) during the period of the covid-19 restricted prisons regime and (b) in general.

Lucy Frazer:

Information relating to the proportion of prisoners' telephone contact to supports workers could only be obtained at disproportionate cost as this would require contacting and collating information from each prison establishment across the prison estate.

We understand the importance of these support services in ensuring the well-being of prisoners, and their rehabilitation and temporary measures are in place for prisoners to maintain contact with their families via the PIN phone system. However, these handsets are unable to accept incoming calls, including those from authorised support workers.

■ Prisoners: Telephones and Video Conferencing

Ms Lyn Brown: [51781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of (a) male and (b) female prisoners had access to (i) telephony and (ii) video calling facilities to maintain contact with family members during the week of the 20 May 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

In recognition of the importance of continued contact with family, we have moved quickly to keep prisoners in touch with their family members. This includes the introduction of 900 locked mobile phones to establishments that do not yet have in-cell telephony. The locked mobile phones allow prisoners to be connected to the existing PIN phone system and call their approved telephone numbers allowing them to maintain contact with family and friends.

By the week of 20 May all prisoners, male and female, had access to some form of telephony either in-cell, landing PIN phone or a locked mobile.

On 15 May, we announced the expansion of video calling to 10 prisons, following a successful pilot at HMP Berwyn, with a wider rollout in the coming weeks. The week commencing 18 May represented the first operating week of this expansion during which the first 10 prisons received their equipment. As this week includes training and start up activity, it is not possible to provide a more detailed breakdown.

■ Probation: Contracts

Philip Davies: [\[51757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department plans to recommence the Partner Delivery Programme competition on probation contracts.

Philip Davies: [\[51758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he plans to take to encourage (a) private sector and (b) third sector involvement in the delivery of probation services.

Philip Davies: [\[51759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his plans are for the future of probation services and the partnership model involving Community Rehabilitation Companies; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

Probation reform remains a top priority for the Department. We set out plans last year to strengthen probation by building on the changes introduced by Transforming Rehabilitation, while addressing some of the challenges in the system. Under these plans, contracts for Community Rehabilitation Companies will end in June 2021. We are currently reflecting on the implications of COVID-19 for the future probation model, and the competitive process for Probation Delivery Partner contracts was suspended on 26 May 2020 to allow time for this consideration. We will provide an update shortly.

■ Sentencing: Coronavirus

Alex Cunningham: [\[51949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications of the covid-19 outbreak for his policy on sentencing women who are (a) pregnant or (b) have babies.

Chris Philp:

Sentencing in individual cases is entirely a matter for our independent courts and sentences should not be differentiated based purely on gender. However, the law provides that sentencers should take into account the particular circumstances of an offender and this can include whether they have dependent children. Sentencing guidelines also provide for mitigation for primary carers and list the impact on others as a factor to be taken into account in considering type and severity of a sentence.

A custodial sentence should always be a last resort. The courts must not pass a custodial sentence unless they believe that the offence was so serious that neither a

fine alone nor a community sentence can be justified. Therefore, courts first consider whether a fine or community sentence can be justified. In the event a custodial sentence is imposed, the law also requires that it should be for the shortest time possible, commensurate with the seriousness of the offence.

We have made information known to sentencers on the practical issues which arise in prisons as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also provided guidance to court staff on meeting diverse needs during the pandemic along as well as virtual interviewing guidance.

Based on the principle that when deciding sentence, the courts are able to take into account the likely impact of a custodial sentence in an individual case, the Court of Appeal laid out in the judgement in the case of *R v Christopher Manning* that judges and magistrates should keep in mind that the impact of a custodial sentence is likely to be heavier during the current emergency.

We have also considered measures to support those already sentenced to custody. As part of those measures, pregnant women in custody and mothers and babies living in prison Mother and Baby Units made up the first tranche of prisoners to be considered for early release, in recognition of their additional vulnerabilities during the coronavirus pandemic.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Vicky Foxcroft:

[52238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May to Question 43706 on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) employment support allowance and (b) personal independence payment tribunals are accessible to individuals with hearing loss.

Chris Philp:

The decision as to how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge, who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice. In considering the suitability of video/audio hearings to replace face to face hearings, judges will consider issues such as the nature of the matters at stake during the hearing. They will also consider any issues the use of video/audio technology may present for participants in the hearing, having regard to individuals' needs including hearing impairment.

Audio and video hearings provide an additional channel for conducting a hearing and should be as accessible as possible but they may not be suitable for everyone. Individuals should advise the Tribunal if there are any circumstances about themselves or their case which may affect or impair their ability to participate effectively in an audio or video hearing. This will inform the judiciary's decision.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) is very sensitive to the needs of people with a wide range of physical and mental disabilities. Tribunal staff and judicial office holders are trained accordingly, with HMCTS' reasonable adjustments policy and practice applied where appropriate.

■ Solicitors: Legal Aid Scheme

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much was spent on free and independent police station advice across England and Wales in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many claims were submitted to the Legal Aid Agency for police station attendances in England and Wales in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many paralegals work for firms of solicitors with a criminal legal aid contract.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors hold a criminal legal aid contract as at 1 June 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many new law firms have obtained a criminal legal aid contract in each year since 2010.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Duty Solicitors there are in England and Wales as at 1 June 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many accredited police station representatives there are in England and Wales as at 1 June 2020.

Karl Turner: [R] [\[51905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of law firms holding a criminal legal aid contract.

Due to the complexity of the accompanying table, the link below is to the web version of the answer:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-01/51905>

LEADER OF THE HOUSE■ **House of Commons: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[54942\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what discussions he has had with (a) House of Commons staff and (b) trade unions on the health and safety concerns of working on the Parliamentary Estate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

I have been in regular contact with the House Authorities throughout the pandemic about the need to bring Parliament back to work in a safe, responsible way in line with public health guidance. As a member of the House of Commons Commission I have also benefited from updates from representatives of the trade unions. In the same way that we prepared for the House's virtual return after Easter we also worked in collaboration with the House Authorities to ensure that we were ready for the physical return.

Staffing arrangements in the House of Commons are a matter for the House rather than the Government but I am clear that staff should continue to work from home wherever that is possible and any staff that do have to be on site must adhere to the social distancing restrictions. Workplaces should be risk assessed on that basis.

NORTHERN IRELAND■ **Abortion: Northern Ireland****Ian Paisley:**[\[54110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will make an assessment of the implications for the Government's policy of the Northern Ireland Assembly opposing the extension of abortion regulations to Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Northern Ireland Assembly has not opposed the Abortion (Northern Ireland) (No. 2) Regulations 2020.

The debate in the Assembly on 2 June 2020 was focused on one aspect of those regulations, severe fetal impairment, and does not have any binding effects on the Regulations we have made.

As abortion remains a devolved issue in Northern Ireland, the Assembly remains able to legislate on abortion, subject to the usual Assembly and other procedures, including compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights. The UK Government will continue to ensure we abide by our domestic and international legal obligations.

■ Educational Visits: Coronavirus

Carla Lockhart:

[\[54279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has taken steps to help secure financial support for (a) schools and (b) pupils and their families in Northern Ireland who face losing money for cancelled school trips as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Robin Walker:

On 17 March, the FCO advised against all non-essential international travel and on 4 April confirmed that this UK-wide advice would stay in place until further notice. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures remain in place across the UK.

The question of changes, cancellation and refunds for school trip bookings affected by these restrictions is a matter for schools to discuss with their tour operator, airline, transport/accommodation provider and insurance company (as applicable). They are best placed to advise on the options available to them.

Education is a devolved matter and the Department of Education and the Education Authority in Northern Ireland continue to provide guidance and support to schools.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Dominic Cummings

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51836\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, for what reason he did not permit two broadcast journalists at the Government's Daily Press Conference on 28 May 2020 from asking the (a) independent chief scientific adviser and (b) chief medical officer for their view on the effect on public health of recent actions of Dominic Cummings.

Boris Johnson:

I refer the hon Member to my answer at the press conference.

TRANSPORT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Grahame Morris:

[\[52647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what additional payments have been made by Northern Rail to its cleaning sub-contractor, beyond those already agreed in its existing contract, as a result of the need to enhance the cleaning regime on its trains and stations in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Whilst Northern's train cleaning is done in house, cleaning for stations is sub-contracted and so any payments made for the cleaning of stations are a commercial matter between Northern Trains Ltd and the contractor.

■ Air Routes: Coronavirus**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[\[51561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits on establishing air bridges with countries that can demonstrate they have (a) no significant domestic covid-19 restrictions in place and (b) adequate public health protocols the border that comply with EASA guidance.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is carefully considering the concept of 'international travel corridors' (also known as air bridges), which have the potential to remove the need for quarantine measures for incoming passengers. It is currently not agreed Government policy.

Ultimately, we will be guided by the science, and the health of the public will always come first.

Other countries are considering similar proposals.

■ Airlines: Coronavirus**Sarah Owen:**[\[55045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 52534, what discussions his Department has had with representatives from airlines on Government support to alleviate financial difficulties that have arisen due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19, and has been engaging regularly with airlines throughout the UK to understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on their financial position.

Businesses across the industry, including airlines, have been able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures put in place during this time. This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

If airlines find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus even following the Government's cross-economy wage and financial interventions, the Transport Secretary and Chancellor have confirmed that 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.

Airlines across the country are eligible and have accessed these schemes which has protected a substantial number of jobs across the industry. We do not comment on the commercial or financial matters of private firms and are therefore it would be inappropriate to detail individual discussions.

Sarah Owen:

[\[55046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 52534, what steps the Government has taken to publicise the availability of bespoke packages of support for airlines facing financial difficulties due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19, and has been meeting with airlines based in the UK on a regular basis to understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on their financial position. These meetings have also been used to inform and advise airlines on the support that can be potentially available to them if applicable.

Businesses across the industry, including airlines, have been able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures put in place during this time. This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

The Chancellor wrote to airlines and airports across the sector 24th March. As that letter outlined if airlines find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus even following the Government's cross-economy wage and financial interventions, the Transport Secretary and Chancellor have confirmed that the Government is prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support, but only as a last resort, having exhausted all other options. Any intervention would need to represent value for money for taxpayers.

■ Airports: Coronavirus

Henry Smith:

[\[51854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of temperature screening at UK airports as a method for preventing the spread of covid-19.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government's approach to tackling coronavirus has always been guided by science. Testing will not identify everyone who is infected with coronavirus when they enter the UK – especially as some people might be asymptomatic. That is why we will be asking all travellers to self-isolate for 14 days.

The Government will continue to review whether and when additional measures are needed to slow the spread of coronavirus and we are monitoring the decision for some airports to trial temperature screening.

Henry Smith:

[\[51855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the economic effect of covid-19 on (a) airports and (b) the local authorities in which they are located.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19, and has been engaging regularly with airports throughout the UK to understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on their financial position. The Government continues to do so.

Businesses across the industry, including airports, have drawn on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time.

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. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will continue to work with local government over the coming weeks to develop a collective understanding of the costs that local authorities are facing, and to ensure that they are managing as the pandemic progresses.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus**Mark Pritchard:**[\[51764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what scientific advice he received from Public Health England on the public health benefits of quarantining passengers who arrive at UK airports.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth on 20 May 2020, PQ UIN 43656.

Paul Maynard:[\[51822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what economic impact assessment he has made of quarantine measures in response to covid-19 outbreak on (a) airlines and (b) airports.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department for Transport has ensured the economic impact assessment, led by the Treasury, reflects the impacts the measures will have on the transport sector and the wider economy, and ensured specific and targeted exemptions to mitigate the impact.

Paul Maynard:[\[51823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has held with the aviation sector on the criteria to be used when carrying out the review of quarantine restrictions every three weeks.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department for Transport has engaged with the aviation sector on this issue and will continue to do so in the coming weeks. This includes working with senior representatives from the aviation industry as part of the Aviation Restart and Recovery Expert Steering Group. This group serves as the working group for the International Aviation Taskforce – one of five sectoral taskforces announced by the

Government on 13 May to support the development of guidelines for safely reopening businesses.

Paul Maynard: [\[51824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the International Civil Aviation Organisation on introducing international protocols for the management of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The UK is an active participant in ICAO and has played a leading role in the ICAO Civil Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART), which was set up specifically to address the aviation industry's recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Common international public health measures for aviation are discussed, and guidance was published by CART on 2 June.

Henry Smith: [\[51857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice he has received from SAGE on the effectiveness of (a) quarantine periods, (b) temperature checks and (c) testing of passengers arriving at UK airports.

Henry Smith: [\[52658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when SAGE were consulted on the implementation of a 14-day quarantine period for people arriving at UK ports.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth on 20 May 2020, PQ UIN 43656.

Henry Smith: [\[51858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what comparative assessment he has made of the effectiveness of steps other countries have taken to support their aviation industries during the covid-19 pandemic.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has been closely monitoring developments in the global aviation sector and how the international community has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chancellor has announced an unprecedented package of measures which the aviation sector has made extensive use of, including a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals. Additionally, Government remain open to discussions about bespoke financial support, but only as a last resort. The Department has been in close contact with key industry stakeholders to understand more about their position and the support they need. Calls with the industry are continuing in parallel to our work to progress potential support measures.

Henry Smith:

[51860]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much financial support has been provided to (a) airports, (b) airlines and (c) the aviation supply chain in response to the covid-19 outbreak, to date.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19.

Businesses across the industry have been able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures put in place during this time by the Government. In addition the sector has been able to apply for the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Finance Facility. However, if businesses across the sector find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus even following the Government's cross-economy wage and financial interventions, the Transport Secretary and Chancellor have confirmed that 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.

Businesses across the sector are eligible and have accessed these schemes which has protected a number of jobs across the industry. We do not comment on the commercial or financial matters of private firms and are therefore unable to say anything further at this stage.

Henry Smith:

[51861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on employment within the UK aviation sector and associated supply chain.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Before the impact of COVID-19, the UK aviation sector directly employed around 230,000 jobs (130,000 in air transport and 100,000 in aerospace). Following the sharp contraction in aviation demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in the UK aviation sector has been significantly impacted.

Workers in the aviation sector are being supported by the unprecedented economic measures we have put in place, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. At least 50,000 airline and aerospace employees have been furloughed using the scheme. However, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, easyJet, Rolls Royce and John Menzies are among UK aviation companies that have announced plans for tens of thousands of redundancies.

Government is continuing to monitor the impact on employment within the UK aviation sector, and as we now begin to re-open the economy, it is right that state support is slowly reduced and the focus shifts to getting furloughed employees back to work.

Gerald Jones:

[\[54975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) other Cabinet colleagues on Government support for airlines and the aviation industry.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has been working closely with the aviation sector and HM Treasury to produce and support measures which will ensure there is sufficient capacity to protect global travel routes, continue repatriation, freight and maintain vital connectivity. The Secretary of State is regularly meeting with his Cabinet colleagues including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in addition to the many more meetings attended by Junior Ministers and DfT Officials to help achieve these goals.

Matt Western:

[\[55000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to protect jobs in the aviation sector which are at risk as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The aviation sector will be able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which provides financial support for employees. Employers in the aviation sector can apply for a grant that covers 80% of furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs, up to £2500 a month, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions.

■ **Belly Mujinga**

Patrick Grady:

[\[54933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the British Transport Police on its investigation into the death of Belly Mujinga.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with the British Transport Police on their investigation into the death of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020. The investigation is an operational matter for BTP.

Patrick Grady:

[\[54934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the British Transport Police on releasing the CCTV footage of the assault of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with the British Transport Police on releasing the CCTV footage of the alleged assault of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020.

Patrick Grady:

[\[54935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the (a) British Transport Police and (b) Crown Prosecution service on the decision by the British Transport Police not to refer the alleged assault of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020 to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with either (a) the British Transport Police or (b) the Crown Prosecution Service on the alleged assault of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020. The decision on whether to progress the case is one for BTP.

■ Blue Badge Scheme

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the evidence required from applicants for Blue Badges that are not in receipt of personal independence payments and disability living allowance.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

To help reduce the application process for those not in receipt of personal independence payments and disability living allowance we have provided local authorities with the option in our Blue Badge digital service to mark applicants who are applying through the further assessment route as “not for reassessment”. This choice can be used where it is clear that applicants conditions or disabilities are unlikely to improve and should therefore reduce the amount of evidence required when they reapply.

The Department is constantly looking at ways to make the online application form and application process as straightforward and as intuitive for applicants as possible.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the stress caused to blue badge applicants of the (a) moving around activity test and (b) requirement to provide a list of registered healthcare professionals.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department recognises that applicants for a Blue Badge can find some aspects of the process challenging and has therefore recommended, via non-statutory guidance, that local authorities only use mobility assessments where an applicant's eligibility is uncertain. The requirement to provide details of registered healthcare professionals involved with the applicant's care provides local authorities with contact details should they require further insight into the applicant's condition if eligibility remains unclear.

■ Boats: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[\[52475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Marine and Coastguard Agency plans to issue guidance to charter boat operators on social distancing requirements during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has been working in partnership with the industry to ensure the flow of vital goods through our ports can continue, while supporting a safe restart for the wider sector in line with the Government's plan.

The Department has already published specific guidance on the application of social distancing requirements to transport operators, which is available online at gov.uk. We will continue to support the sector to ensure transport services can be operated as safely as possible.

■ British Airways: Repayments

Jessica Morden:

[\[51748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure British Airways are providing cash refunds for flights that have been cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department for Transport is in regular conversation with UK airlines and wider membership bodies. We are working closely with the sector, the regulator and consumer groups to help ensure airlines deliver on their commitments.

Airlines are working hard to answer the high call volumes and to process large volumes of refunds. However, the Government appreciates the frustration consumers may be experiencing. We have been clear that where a consumer has asked for a refund, that refund must be paid.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Mr William Wragg:

[\[52120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of when the private coach industry will be able to return to either partial or full operation during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

On 10 May, the Government set out its roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the Coronavirus outbreak, which included five tests which must be satisfied in order to progress forward to enable the country to recover as quickly and safely as possible. As and when sectors of the economy re-open, coach operators should see a return to operation as demands for home-to-school transport, leisure travel and other activities increase.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[52616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the income of private sector bus operators that has been met by (a) Government and (b) local authorities since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) was established to help protect and increase bus services, allowing people travelling to hospitals, supermarkets or their place of work to get to their destination safely and quickly, while helping ensure there is enough space for them to observe social distancing guidelines. There will be a reconciliation process after every 12 weeks of funding to ensure that no operator is made better or worse off by providing these services with government and local authority support. This will include collecting data on how much of their financial shortfall has been made up by local authority support.

■ **Condor Ferries: Employment**

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to protect seafarer employment on lifeline ferry links from southern England to the Channel Islands operated by Condor Ferries.

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[\[52393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to hold discussions with Columbia Threadneedle Investments and Brittany Ferries on seafarers employed by Condor Ferries on lifeline ferry routes from Portsmouth and Poole to the Channel Islands.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The government has announced an unprecedented package of financial measures to support businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic, worth £350 billion. This includes supporting both employers and employees via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), by paying furloughed staff 80% of their current salary, up to £2,500. To access the CJRS, a company must have a UK bank account and have started a PAYE payroll scheme on or before 19 March 2020. My officials have previously engaged with Condor Ferries and expressed these requirements to them. We have continued to offer our support to them during this difficult time.

My officials and I have also been working closely with businesses across the maritime sector to understand how these measures can be applied and will continue to do so. The Department recognises the important role Condor Ferries provides to the region and local communities and are also working with the Ports to ensure that the areas remain well connected during this period. We recognise the vital contribution that seafarers make to the UK's economy and remain committed to supporting them.

The Channel Island governments have also launched a similar scheme as well as other financial measures to support local businesses. Those staff members that are

employed and paid through the Channel Islands would be subject to the terms and conditions governing those particular schemes and be a matter for the Channel Island governments.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

Luke Pollard:

[\[52465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his 9 May 2020 announcement of new walking and cycling funding in response to covid-19, when he expects payments of that funding to be received by local authorities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The first £45 million tranche of the Emergency Active Travel Fund will be released to local authorities as soon as possible. Officials are currently working at pace reviewing the applications for funding submitted to Department. Indicative allocations for tranche one have been published on gov.uk and Plymouth was provisionally allocated £249,000. The Department intends to confirm the final amounts awarded to individual local authorities later this month. This will enable work to begin at pace on emergency measures such as closing roads to through traffic, installing segregated cycle lanes and widening pavements. The second tranche of £180m will be released later in the summer.

■ **Cycling: Electric Vehicles**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[52581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of further encouraging the uptake of cycling by extending the subsidies his Department provides to other electric vehicles to include e-bikes.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The cycle to work scheme allows employees to access e-bikes at a discount, and since February 2018 the Department has supported the uptake of e-cargo bikes through a £2m grant programme. The Department has also supported some local authorities with local schemes to support the uptake of e-bikes, through its £20 million per annum Access Fund. The Department will keep under review the case for further support for e-bikes following the announcement on 9 May of a £2 billion package of support for cycling and walking.

■ **Cycling: Voucher Schemes**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[52579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the value for money of the administration charges levied by providers of the Cycle to Work Scheme vouchers; and if he will make a statement.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[52580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of placing a cap on the costs charged by providers of the Cycle to Work Scheme vouchers as (a) a proportion of the total purchase cost of a bike and (b) a flat rate.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has made no assessment of these charges and costs. Where an employer uses a scheme provider for their Cycle to Work Scheme any arrangements for costs and charges are matters for the two parties to determine as part of the contract between themselves.

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

■ Driving Instruction: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[51660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what plans the Government has to allow driving instructors to conduct their work safely.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) recommends that, currently, approved driving instructors (ADI) should only provide lessons to candidates who have an essential need. ADIs should ask pupils to bring appropriate identification to demonstrate the need for the lesson: a payslip, letter or identification badge should suffice.

When providing driving lessons, all ADIs should put in place appropriate measures, in line with the latest Public Health England and Cabinet Office guidance, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. It is the responsibility of the ADI and the pupil to consider the risks to their health and to decide if the driving lesson is essential.

We are reviewing when driving tests and lessons may be able to resume and will announce details in due course.

■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[51659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, when the DVA plans to issue guidance in respect of whether driving tests scheduled for July 2020 will take place.

Rachel Maclean:

As the health and safety of staff and customers is key, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is currently working hard to prepare for a safe return to testing.

At present, its testing services are under review and it will announce details of resumption in due course.

Dr Luke Evans:[\[52546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the DVSA on ensuring that driving (a) theory and (b) practical tests resume after the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

As the health and safety of staff and customers is key, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is currently working closely with the Department for Transport to prepare for a safe return to testing.

At present, its testing services are under review and it will announce details of resumption in due course.

■ Driving Tests: Repayments**Zarah Sultana:**[\[52552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure refunds are paid to people (a) whose theory test has expired during the driving test suspension and (b) whose theory test will expire while they are on the waiting list for a practical test after the suspension is lifted.

Rachel Maclean:

The two-year validity period of the theory test certificate is set in legislation. This is so the candidate's theoretical knowledge and ability to identify developing hazards remains current. To extend the validity period would require legislative change.

Candidates who have had their practical driving test suspended as a result of COVID-19 will receive an email from the DVSA telling them the date of their rescheduled test. The test will be rescheduled automatically, and free of charge. The candidate can, if they prefer, request a refund of their practical test fee.

■ Driving: Eyesight**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[52517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to review (a) regulations and (b) guidance on driving with defective eyesight.

Rachel Maclean:

In July 2019, the Department for Transport published its Road Safety Statement and two-year action plan to address road safety issues. The work being undertaken includes consideration of the arrangements for assessing eyesight for drivers who may pose a risk to road safety. The statement can be found online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety

■ **Driving: Licensing**

Daniel Zeichner: [52063]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what steps the DVLA has taken to process licence applications by key workers who hold a driving licence issued in another EU country.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is providing a dedicated service to prioritise driving licence applications from key workers. This includes a dedicated postal address for driving licence applications and support through the DVLA's contact centre. This service is available to all key workers, including those who wish to exchange EU driving licences.

Patrick Grady: [54936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the number of people who qualify to continue driving while waiting for the DVLA to process their application for renewal of their driving licence under Section 88 of The Road Traffic Act 1988 but cannot obtain car insurance coverage due to that situation.

Rachel Maclean:

No figures are available on the number of drivers who continue to drive under the Section 88 provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1988. This is because drivers must consider whether they can meet the relevant criteria.

Insurance cover in these circumstances would be a matter for the driver and their insurer.

Owen Thompson: [54955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications for new provisional driving licenses have been suspended as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; when the processing of those applications will resume; and how long applicants will have to wait to receive their new licence.

Rachel Maclean:

Applications for provisional driving licences can be made online at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-first-provisional-driving-licence>. Customers can also make postal applications for a provisional driving licence. However, paper applications are likely to take significantly longer to process in the current circumstances.

■ Electric Vehicles: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to encourage the use of powered two wheel vehicles as an alternative to public transport during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

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.

In response to COVID-19, we are accelerating and expanding planned trials of rental e-scooters, allowing all areas that want to host trials to do so. We will introduce legislation in June to allow trials to begin.

■ Electric Vehicles: Hydrogen

Greg Smith:

[\[52536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to create jobs in hydrogen transport technology.

Rachel Maclean:

The UK is particularly well placed to be a leader in hydrogen and fuel cell powered transportation due to our high-quality engineering and manufacturing capability in relevant supply chains creating opportunities for investment and jobs. The Government's approach to delivering long-term ambitions for greener transport is technology neutral and we are supporting hydrogen where the market favours its use.

In road transport, hydrogen is eligible for support under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation following changes made to the scheme in April 2018. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the Advanced Propulsion Centre are funding a wide range of development projects in hydrogen roads vehicles across technology readiness levels. Government is also supporting the technology through the £23m Hydrogen for Transport programme and £2m FCEV fleet support scheme. The Clean Maritime Plan published last year recognised hydrogen as one of a number of the key fuels on a pathway to zero-emission shipping. Our innovation programmes have supported the development of hydrogen technology, such as the 'Hydroflex' train, and continue to provide funding opportunities for innovative environmental projects. These trials may provide a springboard for industry growth and commercial exploitation. In support of the Clean Maritime Plan (2019) the Department has published research into the economic opportunities afforded by the transition to alternative fuels in shipping, and has undertaken an assessment of uptake scenarios for such fuels, including hydrogen and hydrogen carriers.

Greg Smith:

[\[52537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential of hydrogen electric vehicles to provide sustainable, greener transport in rural areas.

Rachel Maclean:

Hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles have zero tailpipe emissions. Like battery electric vehicles, their well-to-wheel greenhouse gas emissions depend on the method of energy production. A range of production pathways and technological improvements in hydrogen production are under development, with the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts of a range of fuel and powertrain options for cars, vans, buses and heavy goods vehicles over the period to 2050. This assessment does not distinguish between urban and rural scenarios with regard to the potential for greener transport in rural areas. Network Rail is developing a Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy that will examine which parts of the network are best suited to use of hydrogen trains, as well as battery and electrification. This will inform Government decisions in 2020.

■ **Ferries: Freight**

Karl Turner:

[\[51908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what external advice his Department received in designing the Public Service Obligations under which ferry operators are providing freight capacity on designated routes for nine-weeks from 11 May 2020.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department for Transport engaged external experts for legal, technical and financial advice on the design of the Public Service Obligation Agreements.

■ **Freight: Exports**

Andrew Griffith:

[\[49883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of UK freight by value was exported via (a) UK sea ports, (b) bellyhold of passenger flights, (v) freighter aircraft and (d) road hauliers via France in 2019.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department does not collect data on the value of freight by mode of transport.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Environment Protection**

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[52101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2020 to Question 18, how many potential breaches of (a) wildlife and (b) environmental protection legislation have been reported against (i) HS2 Ltd and (ii) their contractors in each of the

last five years; and what processes are in place to record and learn from potential breaches.

Andrew Stephenson:

There have been no prosecutions for breaches in wildlife or environmental protection legislation in relation to HS2 Ltd or its contractors in the last 5 years. HS2 Ltd has a process for live reporting and recording of credible potential breaches and these are reviewed daily, with reporting on a monthly basis at both the programme and senior level. HS2 Ltd takes the risk of breaches very seriously. Were one to occur, this would be investigated as necessary with the involvement of the relevant statutory authority where applicable.

■ **High Speed 2 Railway Line: Training**

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[51812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on progress being made by (a) the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and (b) other employer-led further education colleges in meeting the skills requirements of the HS2 rail programme.

Andrew Stephenson:

(a) Officials within DfT are working closely with their opposite numbers in DfE regarding NCATI. DfT are active members of the Steering Group overseeing the Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) being led by DfE's Further Education Commissioner to ensure its future model is sustainable and delivers on DfT Policy objectives.

(b) HS2 Ltd and its supply chain continue to work with Further Education Colleges on a number of employer and college-led initiatives and programmes. The table below summarises the main activities:

NAME OF COLLEGE	INITIATIVE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Buckinghamshire College Group (Aylesbury, High Wycombe & Amersham)	CITB Construction Skills Fund	Elffage-Kier, Main Works Contractor, bid for and won CITB funded training through a number of training providers including Buckinghamshire College Group from May 2019 -present. Benefitted 180 individuals to date: of those, 153 completed Entry into Construction programme, 15 completed qualifications in both Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) & Institute of

NAME OF COLLEGE	INITIATIVE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
		Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH), plus a further 8 in IEMA and 4 in IOSH.
Buckinghamshire College Group	Careers Fairs	Eiffage-Kier and Align, Main Works Contractors, attended careers fairs to talk about career opportunities with young people between Feb 2018 – May 2019
Derby College	Professional Construction Employers' Group / T-Level Taskforce	HS2 Ltd has been a member of the Professional Construction Employers' Group since September 2019, and on the T-Level Taskforce since its inception in December 2019 to assist in development of the T level in Construction: Design, Surveying and Planning.
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	Mayor's Construction Academy	The Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) is a London Mayoral initiative to deliver the skilled workforce needed to support London's housing and infrastructure needs. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London run one of the MCA Hubs that is responsible for co-ordinating the provision of relevant training. HS2 Ltd, Skanska Costain Strabag (SCS Railways), Balfour Beatty Vinci Systra (BBVS) and Align sit on the Employer and Partnership Boards of this MCA Hub to ensure that the training that is delivered and co-ordinated meets HS2's needs as far as possible.
Harrow College and Uxbridge	Institute of Technology	HS2 Ltd, BBVS and Align sit

NAME OF COLLEGE	INITIATIVE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
College		on the Employer Advisory Board for the Institute of Technology delivered by Harrow College and Uxbridge College, in partnership with Brunel University. This has included supporting a number of activities including an apprenticeship fair and speed networking event at Uxbridge College as part of National Apprenticeship Week in February 2020.
Newham College	Strategic partnership with the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure	HS2 Ltd, Costain Skanska, SCS Railways, Mace Dragados, BBVS and Align are in active discussions about how we can support Newham College, linked to their strategic partnership with the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure. This includes the potential for specifically supporting the Institute of Technology they run in partnership with Queen Mary University. Other activities have been supported by HS2, such as an apprenticeship fair held at Newham College's Stratford campus as part of National Apprenticeship Week in February 2020.
Northampton College		HS2 Ltd, Eiffage-Kier, and Flannery Plant Hire (Tier 2 supplier) have worked collaboratively with Northampton College and there are plans to expand on this work in the future (e.g.

NAME OF COLLEGE	INITIATIVE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Solihull Council	Careers & Apprenticeship Fair	virtual careers events) HS2 Ltd promoted our apprenticeship and graduate opportunities at the Solihull College 2020 Careers & Apprenticeship Fair in March.
South & City College, Birmingham	Women into Construction Project	South & City College delivered the 2-week employability training element of the Women into Construction project in May 2019. Following the 2 weeks employability training, participants then completed a 4-week work placement on the HS2 programme. The project trained a total of 16 women that were previously not in employment. 8 women (50%) progressed into employment or further accredited training. The majority of the employment offers were within the HS2 supply chain.
Walsall College	Walsall Expo	HS2 Ltd joined our Tier 1 Main Works Civils Contractor Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV) at the Walsall Expo in March 2020. Walsall Expo is held at Walsall College and organised by Walsall Works which is funded by Walsall Council to support local people to find jobs, apprenticeships and access training, while also supporting local businesses that are looking to expand and invest in their future workforce. We were able to promote a number of live opportunities including our apprenticeship

NAME OF COLLEGE	INITIATIVE	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
		and graduate opportunities. BBV were also able to promote their Materials Testing opportunities as well as other live vacancies. In total approximately 1,700 jobseekers attended the event.
Walsall College	T Levels	Balfour Beatty Vinci, Main Works Contractor, is working with Walsall College to deliver their first T level in Construction: Design, Surveying and Planning.
Warwickshire College Group	Rail and Construction Industry Day	HS2 Ltd, Main Works Civils Contractors Balfour Beatty Vinci & Eiffage-Kier along with Enabling Works contractors Laing Murphy & Fusion attended the Warwickshire College Group Rail and Construction Industry day in March 2019. We provided information to college students on careers in the sector along with running workshops on Building Information modelling (BIM)

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Tree Planting

Kirsten Oswald:

[52100]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the health of saplings planted as part of HS2 mitigation measures; and what steps he is taking to ensure regular monitoring of those saplings.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd has appointed an independent inspector responsible for checking the quality of cultivated plant material. Plant material is inspected twice a year, including a pre-delivery inspection of its size and quality. The independent inspector also carries out inspections of material delivered to sites to further confirm that it meets the required specifications. The inspector produces a report for each inspection, which includes

recommendations for HS2 Ltd or its supply chain as necessary. Material is planted by the Early Works Contractors, who have the responsibility for regular inspection and maintenance during tree establishment, including the replacement of any defective or failed plant material.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Qualifications

Thangam Debbonaire:

[52129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what changes he is making to the requirement for heavy goods vehicle drivers to be periodically tested for a Certificate of Professional Competence while test centres are closed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

Most professional lorry and bus drivers must complete 35 hours of periodic training every 5 years to maintain their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) qualification. This is evidenced by a Driver CPC card (sometimes called a 'driver qualification card' or 'DQC').

Periodic training is available remotely from commercial providers, via online video platforms. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency encourages drivers to continue to undertake training wherever possible, but not as an activity that needs extra travel and only in compliance with general government advice.

The validity of DQCs with expiry dates from 1 February 2020 to 31 August 2020 have been extended by 7 months.

Drivers will not be issued with a new card to reflect the new expiry date, and must continue to carry their DQC.

Drivers who have a DQC that has an expiry date from 1 September 2020 must not drive until it is renewed.

■ London North Eastern Railway: Cleaning Services

Ian Mearns:

[R] [51883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department made as to whether it would be more (a) economical, (b) efficient and (c) safe for LNER to bring cleaning services in-house, rather than outsourcing it to Atalian Servest; and if he will publish that assessment.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It is for LNER to decide how best to resource support functions such as cleaning, and subcontracting these tasks to specialist suppliers is standard practice in the rail sector.

Ian Mearns:

[R] [51884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how frequently LNER trains and stations were deep cleaned (a) before and (b) during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As my Department does not hold this information, I have asked LNER to meet with the Honourable Gentlemen to discuss its cleaning regime; the operator will contact him shortly to arrange this.

Ian Mearns:**[R] [\[51885\]](#)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) headcount and (b) Full Time Equivalent were for cleaners employed to clean LNER's trains and stations in each year since 2017.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As my Department does not hold this information, I have asked LNER to meet with the Honourable Gentlemen to discuss its cleaning regime; the operator will contact him shortly to arrange this.

Ian Mearns:**[R] [\[51886\]](#)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the number of cleaners employed to clean LNER's trains and stations has increased in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

To help prevent the transmission of coronavirus, all rail operators are taking measures to ensure our trains and stations are clean. Steps include a greater focus on cleaning high-touch areas in trains and at stations (such as hand rails and ticket machine screens), more intensive cleaning and ensuring toilets are well stocked with soap. In light of the lower number of trains in service LNER refocused its cleaning contractor's resources on more intensive cleaning of stations and the trains remaining in service.

Ian Mearns:**[R] [\[51887\]](#)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that there are a sufficient number of cleaners working enough hours on LNER's trains and stations to ensure a safe environment for passengers and staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

LNER is responsible for ensuring a safe environment for passengers and staff during the covid-19 outbreak. The Department has held regular discussions with LNER to understand its response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Ian Mearns:**[R] [\[51888\]](#)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what payments have been made by LNER beyond those already agreed in the contract to enhance the cleaning regime on its trains and stations in response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

This is a commercial matter between LNER and its sub-contractors. I have asked LNER to meet with the Honourable Gentlemen to discuss its cleaning regime; the operator will contact him shortly to arrange this.

Ian Mearns:

[R] [51889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the cleaning of LNER trains and stations, what hygiene and health targets are used; and on which occasions sub-contractors have not met those targets since OLR took over the franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

LNER is obliged to meet the requirements set out in the Services Agreement at Schedule 1.4 Paragraph 7, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879806/london-north-eastern-railway-limited-east-coast-franchise.pdf

LNER meets this requirement in part by subcontracting cleaning to a specialist contractor. Effective management of this contract is a matter for LNER.

■ Motor Vehicles

Kerry McCarthy:

[54869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of introducing a scrappage scheme on (a) raising the market share of electric vehicle sales and (b) ending the sale of petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles by 2035.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has no current plans to introduce a scrappage scheme to support the transition to zero emission and electric vehicles. We are investing around £2.5bn with grants available for ultra-low emission vehicles, as well as funding to support charge point infrastructure at homes, workplaces, on residential streets and across the wider roads network. We are consulting on bringing forward the end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time. By talking to stakeholders about the best way to achieve that ambition, we will more easily be able to identify what measures would be needed to support the transition.

■ Motorcycles: Coronavirus

Paul Girvan:

[52373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will revise his Departments guidance on safer travel guidance for passengers to include motorcycles as an allowed mode of transport during covid-19.

Rachel Maclean:

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.

■ National Air Traffic Services

Alan Brown:

[\[52166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the letter from Prospect Union Minister for Aviation, dated 6 May 2020, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Government purchasing the shares in NATS owned by the Airline Group and Heathrow Group; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has made no such assessment.

The Government recognises both the vital nature of the air navigation services NATS provide as well as the impact that the fall in air traffic has had on the company.

The Government has put in place an unprecedented package of economic measures designed to ensure that companies of any size receive the help they need to get through this difficult time. We trust that NATS management will utilise these measures to avoid the need for government intervention.

■ P and O Ferries: Coronavirus

Karl Turner:

[\[51906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 May 2020 to Question 46622, if he will list the value of the contracts awarded to P&O Ferries on routes from the port of Hull; and when he plans to provide the next update on the value of contracts with operators on all 16 routes.

Karl Turner:

[\[51909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the permissible revenue levels are on the designated freight routes from the port of Hull being operated by P&O Ferries under a Public Service Obligation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Two Public Service Obligation (PSO) Agreements were awarded to P&O Ferries on routes from the Port of Hull. The value of the awards will depend on actual revenues and service level requirements during operation. The estimated value of these PSO Agreements at the point of contract award have been published in the Official Journal of the European Union and are as follows:

- PSO Agreement between Hull and Europoort Rotterdam: £3,504,249, – this has since been revised to £4,779,369.
- PSO Agreement between Hull and Zeebrugge: £1,842,210

Further updates on the value of these PSO Agreements will be provided in due course.

There is no permissible revenue level defined in the Public Service Obligation (PSO) Agreements awarded to P&O Ferries on routes from the Port of Hull. All revenues

paid or payable to the operator in connection with its operation of a route are considered as “Recognised Revenues” for the purposes of the PSO Agreements.

■ **Public Transport: Cleaning Services**

Ian Mearns:

[R] [\[51882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of scientific evidence on the comparative levels of health risks associated with outsourced cleaning.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

No scientific assessment has been made on the comparative levels of health risks associated with outsourced cleaning. There is SAGE evidence that standard cleaning techniques will be effective against SARS-COV-2 on surfaces.

■ **Public Transport: Coronavirus**

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[52615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the additional costs incurred by (a) private operators of national rail services and (b) light rail and tram systems as a result from covid-19 have been met by the public purse.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the government has approved £3.5bn of additional expenditure to ensure that vital rail services continue to operate. From this additional expenditure, £2.9bn relates to the 2020/21 financial year. It is not yet possible to provide an estimate of the total cost incurred to date

On 23 May, £29m in support was announced to cover five light rail systems in England. This is intended to cover all reasonable additional costs incurred due to COVID-19 over the period of funding and allow them to operate a full service.

■ **Public Transport: Visual Impairment**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[52545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of regional transport providers on ensuring that support is provided to passengers with sight loss as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Our guidance is clear that regional transport providers and national operators have the same obligations to support visually impaired passengers as they did before the Covid-19 pandemic. As a Department we are working closely with stakeholders, to understand the experiences of disabled passengers and identify the correct support needed as lockdown restrictions are eased.

All local transport and highway authorities across England are ensuring the needs of disabled transport users are included as part of their Restart plans.

■ Railway Stations: Cleaning Services

Ian Mearns:

[R] [\[51880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what hygiene and health targets are used for the cleaning of railway stations; and on what occasions (a) Interserve and (b) Mitie have failed to meet those targets.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Train operators are responsible for managing contracts with cleaning suppliers. In response to the current crisis, operators are implementing enhanced cleaning regimes at stations and on trains, and we are regularly monitoring this as part of the franchise management process.

■ Railways: Bradford

Philip Davies:

[\[51750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the additional train services between Kings Cross, Shipley and Bradford as set out in the East Coast franchise will be fully delivered.

Philip Davies:

[\[51751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason there has been a delay in the provision of additional train services between London Kings Cross, Shipley and Bradford as set out in the East Coast Franchise.

Philip Davies:

[\[51752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department last met with (i) Network Rail and (ii) LNER to discuss additional train services between London Kings Cross, Shipley and Bradford.

Philip Davies:

[\[51753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse to provide the additional train services between London Kings Cross, Shipley and Bradford as set out in the East Coast franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

An additional service between Kings Cross, Shipley and Bradford will be delivered in July 2020. The outstanding committed services will be delivered as soon as capacity is available.

The introduction of the additional services was originally delayed from May 2019 because of delays to the introduction of LNER's new Azuma trains, in line with guidance from the Industry Programme Management Office Steering Group established following the May 2018 timetable issues. Since then it has become clear that capacity constraints in the Bradford area mean that integrating the LNER services with the existing, intensive Northern commuter services, while protecting their reliability, will be challenging. Infrastructure upgrades may be needed to resolve these capacity constraints

I and my officials met by video conference with Network Rail and LNER, with the Honourable Member present, on 1 June 2020.

The Department has not made a specific recent estimate of the cost to the public purse. The additional services were contracted as part of an overall package in 2015 from Virgin Trains East Coast, the then franchisee, and delivery of them was not affected by the transfer of services to LNER. LNER expects the additional services to be revenue generative, and to have additional wider economic benefits for the areas and communities they serve

■ Railways: Cleaning Services

Ian Mearns:

[R] [\[51881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of Network Rail ending the outsourcing of cleaning.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have been clear that our priority remains ensuring the safety of staff and passengers alike. We have issued comprehensive guidance to employers, which includes Network Rail, on the steps they should take to make their workplaces COVID-secure. It is for employers to decide on the way in which they can discharge their obligations most effectively.

■ Railways: Concessions

Grahame Morris:

[\[51869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which members of the Rail Delivery Group are entitled to a free network-wide rail travel pass.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department holds no information on which members of Rail Delivery Group are entitled to a free network-wide rail travel pass

■ Railways: Electrification

Dr James Davies:

[\[52206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on the re-allocation of good-quality diesel-powered rolling stock following the electrification of railway lines.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It is a matter for operators to procure appropriate rolling stock to operate their services. Electrification can typically lead to significant fleet changes and the Department supports the opportunities presented by the cascade of displaced trains from newly electrified routes. However, we expect train owners and manufacturers to develop cost effective proposals to convert their diesel trains to bi-mode or use alternative energy sources.

■ Rolling Stock: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[54884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June to Question 49660 on Rolling Stock: Coronavirus, how much money from the public purse the Government has paid to Train Operating Companies to cover the contractually agreed rental costs for rolling stock during the period of the Emergency Measures Agreements.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

With reference to the answer to Question 49660 of 2 June, 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 by the Office of Rail and Road in tab 2.13 at https://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/excel_doc/0020/42563/uk-rail-industry-financial-information-2018-19.xlsx.

Grahame Morris:

[\[54885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 202 to Question 49663 on Rolling Stock: Coronavirus, whether he requested that rolling stock companies suspend the payment of dividends in those meetings.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The rolling stock companies are privately owned businesses and no request has been made for them to suspend dividend payments.

■ Rolling Stock: Energy

Dr James Davies:

[\[52205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that energy efficient rolling stock is available to train companies.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Rolling stock procurement in the UK is undertaken through a competitive process by franchised or open access train operators. The Government supports technological innovation which aims to improve the performance of vehicles in terms of energy-efficiency, and support an industry that is a world leader in developing and delivering low carbon rail transport solutions for all. We are working with industry to ensure rail significantly decarbonises and we achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

■ Roll-on Roll-off Ships: Crew

Karl Turner:

[\[51910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the effect on crewing levels on roll-on roll-off ferries operated from (a) Hull and (b) Dover of P&O Ferries' announcement of 11 May 2020 on redundancies among (i) ratings and (ii) officers on those routes.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Crewing levels on all ships, including passenger ferries, are contained in the ship's safe manning document as issued by the flag-State maritime administration in line with international principles.

The P&O ferries operating from (a) Hull and (b) Dover are Cypriot flagged and it is for the Cyprus Maritime Administration to determine the minimum safe manning levels.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's role as the port-State is to monitor the safe operation of these vessels through inspections.

■ Tolls: Greater London**Neil Coyle:**[\[54924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will allocate additional resources to Transport for London to exempt school staff from the congestion charge in London.

Rachel Maclean:

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London and delivered by Transport for London. The administration of the Congestion Charge, including any exemptions, is a matter for Transport for London.

The government recently agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing package for Transport for London to protect key services, helping people to stay safe during the pandemic and supporting the capital's gradual recovery from COVID-19.

■ Traffic Lights**John Redwood:**[\[51511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether grant funding is available to local highway authorities to support the installation of traffic sensing lights to optimise flows at junctions.

Rachel Maclean:

Most UK signals are already traffic responsive in the way described. We have always encouraged local authorities to use responsive systems, as research has shown that where these are properly installed and maintained they can give significant benefits to all road users.

The Department provides block funding to local authorities for local transport, including traffic management, and it is for them to determine how this is best spent in their area.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Maria Eagle:**[\[51604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what consultations his Department has undertaken with representatives of (a) Eurostar and the (b) airlines, (c) ferries, (d) ports and (e) airports industries on the implementation of the 14-day quarantine restrictions for people entering the UK during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has worked closely and extensively with representatives of Eurostar, airlines, airports, ferries, and ports throughout this process. This has included identifying applicable exemptions from the self-isolation requirements.

Mark Pritchard:**[51773]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to keep passengers on public transport who have travelled to the UK from overseas separate from all other passengers on public transport as part of the Government's 14 day quarantine policy.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is encouraging passengers arriving into the UK to use their own private transport or to arrange with friends or family to collect them from the airport, port or station. If they have no other option, passengers are advised to follow the "Safer travel guidance for passengers" when taking public transport, which recommends wearing a face covering if they can, and keeping a 2m distance from others where possible.

The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Paul Maynard:**[51825]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) the Home Secretary on the principle of exemptions from quarantine measures introduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State has held extensive discussions about exemptions from self-isolation measures with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary. Details about those who are exempt from the self-isolation measures were published on 22 May. The list of exemptions will be kept under regular review.

Henry Smith:**[51856]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department first assessed the effectiveness of a 14-day quarantine period.

Kelly Tolhurst:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply previously given to the hon. Member for Cardiff South and Penarth on 20 May 2020, PQ UIN 43656.

Henry Smith:**[51859]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what comparative assessment he has made of the effectiveness of steps other countries have taken at their airports, ports and other entry points to tackle the spread of covid-19.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has been closely monitoring developments in the global aviation sector and how the international community has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UK has been working with a range of international partners to drive forward a shared agenda on public health and aviation through regular meetings and correspondence. The UK is a member of the governing Council of ICAO and has played a leading role in the ICAO Civil Aviation Recovery Taskforce (CART), which was set up specifically to address the aviation industry's recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of maritime port entry requirements, pre-existing control of infectious diseases is already in place through the Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[51913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, if he will publish the scientific evidence underpinning the 14-day quarantine policy.

Kelly Tolhurst:

SAGE advice is not routinely published. Scientific advice can give us estimates of the incidence of coronavirus internationally and domestically, and ministers decide how to respond to the risk of imported cases based on this advice.

The scientific advice shows that when domestic transmission is high, imported cases represent a small amount of the overall total and they make no significant difference to the epidemic. However, this can change when the domestic transmission/rate of infection is low, and people are arriving from countries with a higher rate of infection.

Now that domestic transmission within the UK is coming under control, and other countries begin to lift lockdown measures, it is the right time to prepare new measures at the border, including self-isolation.

TREASURY

■ Air Passenger Duty: Coronavirus

Henry Smith:

[\[51862\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of temporarily suspending air passenger duty for (a) domestic routes, (b) short haul routes and (c) long haul routes to help support the aviation sector.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19 and the Chancellor wrote to the aviation sector on 24 March to set out the Government's position and the support measures available. The Government has announced an unprecedented package of support for workers and businesses to protect against the current economic emergency.

This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has so far helped 1 million employers across the UK furlough nearly 8.5 million jobs, protecting people's livelihoods. This scheme was recently extended until the end of October, meaning

that it will now be in place for a full eight months, giving businesses the vital support that they need.

The Government is also prepared to enter negotiations with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort, having exhausted other options. However further taxpayer support would only be possible if all commercial avenues have been fully explored, including raising further capital from existing investors and discussing arrangements with financial stakeholders.

More broadly, the government has committed to consult on aviation tax reform. We will provide more detail on next steps in due course.

■ **Assessments: Coronavirus**

Richard Fuller:

[51800]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to support people who are examiners and have lost income due the cancellation of GCSE and A-level examinations due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has launched an unprecedented package to protect people's incomes affected by COVID-19 including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for employees and support for the self-employed. Examination boards are independent organisations. As such, they are responsible for deciding on payment arrangements and discussing with HMRC as appropriate. The situation is complex, as the employment status of examiners varies, but the Government is aware that examination boards are providing information and updates to those affected.

■ **Aviation: Coronavirus**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[51746]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on how many occasions Ministers in his Department have met the Secretary of State for Transport to discuss the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the aviation industry in each of the last three months.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury Ministers have regular discussion with the Secretary of State for Transport on a range of topics.

The Government has announced an unprecedented package of support for workers and businesses to protect against the current economic emergency.

■ **Beekeeping: Equipment**

Andrew Rosindell:

[51678]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on removing VAT on bee keeping equipment.

Jesse Norman:

VAT is a broad based tax on consumption and the twenty per cent standard rate applies to most goods and services, including on equipment used for bee keeping. Businesses that are registered for VAT will usually be able to reclaim some or all of the VAT they incur when they purchase these items.

Although all taxes are kept under review, there are no plans to change the VAT treatment of bee keeping equipment at present.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus**Nick Fletcher:****[52607]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support coach companies which operate holidays and charter services during the covid-19 outbreak.

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. Coach companies, along with other businesses, may benefit from a range of support measures including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)
- The Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
- The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises
- A Discretionary Grant Fund for Local Authorities in England to make grants payments of up to £25,000 to businesses excluded from the existing grants schemes
- VAT deferral for up to 12 months
- The Time To Pay scheme, through which businesses 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

The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, and how to apply - <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Sir Edward Davey:****[51546]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many jobs have been furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, broken down by (a) local authority and (b) parliamentary constituency.

Jesse Norman:

Applications for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) opened on Monday 20th April. By midnight 31 May 2020, 1.1m employers had submitted claims to HMRC representing 8.7m furloughed employments and £17.5bn.

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.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[52326\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the uptake of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the event that employers are required to make a contribution of 20 per cent to employees' wages.

Jesse Norman:

In October, employers will be required to make a contribution of 20 per cent to furloughed employees' wages. This employer contribution is being introduced in a measured way to support both firms and employees through the transition, balancing the need to protect jobs against the need to restart the economy as the Covid-19 backdrop improves.

It is likely that some firms will be affected by coronavirus for longer than others, and the Government will seek to support these firms appropriately. The CJRS is just one of the schemes to support firms through Covid-19.

Paul Girvan:[\[52370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what penalties are in place for people who have been found to have misused the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Those who submit claims to HMRC for payment under CJRS are required to state that any money paid by HMRC will be used for the specified purposes. Any claimant who states that the payment will be used for the proper purposes when this is not the case is likely to have committed a criminal offence.

In England and Wales, and in Northern Ireland, it is a crime of fraud, contrary to the Fraud Act 2006, dishonestly to make a false representation with intent to make a gain. Those who dishonestly state in their claims to HMRC that any money they receive under CJRS will be used for the specified purposes, when this is not the case, are likely to have committed fraud. Those who encourage or assist the commission of a crime can also be found guilty of the offence. Those who aid and abet another's crime can also be convicted.

In Scotland, those who engage in a false pretence with an intention to deceive HMRC will commit a common law fraud. Such a false pretence could include saying that the payment under CJRS will be used for the specified purposes when this is not the case. Those who act in concert with the perpetrator of such crimes can also be convicted and punished.

In all parts of the UK, where claimants obtain payments from HMRC through fraudulent claims to the CJRS scheme, any money obtained would be the proceeds of crime. Any dealing with this fraudulent obtained money could amount to the offence of money laundering, contrary to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The money laundering offences contrary to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are punishable with a sentence of imprisonment of up to 14 years, a fine without limit, or both. Fraudulently obtained payments can also be recovered through the provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act dealing with summary forfeiture of assets representing the proceeds of crime.

HMRC will subject CJRS claims to scrutiny and use their usual compliance tools to carry out proportionate risk-based compliance checks before and after payment to test the veracity of CJRS claims. HMRC will take robust steps to prevent fraudulent claims being paid, to recover any payments made to those who are not eligible, and to respond to those to make fraudulent claims. In doing so HMRC will protect essential public services and the livelihoods at risk during these challenging times.

In addition to the fraud powers outlined above, the Government has published for external views draft legislation that will enable HMRC to undertake civil investigations with appropriate powers and sanctions. These powers include compliance powers and proposed penalties for deliberate non-compliance, where appropriate. The draft legislation can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-legislation-taxation-of-coronavirus-covid-19-support-payments>.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud**

Andrew Rosindell:

[51676]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department are taking stop potential fraudulent activity in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government expects the vast majority of employers to do the right thing, but HM Revenue & Customs (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.

In line with the other payment-out regimes they administer, HMRC will undertake pre-payment authentication and risking, to identify and block fraudulent CJRS claims. HMRC will also carry out proportionate risk-based, post-payment compliance checks to test the veracity of claims made using the normal compliance tools available to them.

Fraudulent abuse of the scheme can be reported through HMRC's online tax evasion reporting form, details of which can be found on GOV.UK.

All reports received by HMRC are subject to review and the appropriate and necessary actions are taken in response to the reports.

■ **Customs: Northern Ireland**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 29 of The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, published May 2020, what steps his Department is taking to encourage businesses to sign up to trusted trader schemes to help facilitate the movement of goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Jesse Norman:

The Northern Ireland Protocol is clear that Northern Ireland is, and will remain, part of the UK's customs territory and that there should be no tariffs on internal UK trade. The Government has also set out that although there will be some limited additional process on goods arriving in Northern Ireland, there will be no new physical customs infrastructure.

In due course, the Government will also set out more detailed plans for extensive HMRC support for businesses engaged in the limited additional processes, including providing access to existing facilitations to support the movement of goods.

■ **Customs: Training**

Layla Moran:

[\[52413\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to open the new customs agent academy; and what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of potential delays in the opening of that academy.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the importance of the role of intermediaries in supporting trade and understands that existing UK to rest of world trade is heavily reliant on intermediary services.

HMRC have already made available £34 million of funding to support the expansion of the already well-established customs intermediaries sector. This includes the development of an online customs academy to deliver training to the sector which has been operational since November 2019.

The Government continues to work closely with industry to consider if further support may be needed.

■ **Dental Services: Coronavirus**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[51728\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether dental practices meeting the criteria will be eligible to apply for the top up to the local business grants fund scheme announced on the 2 May 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

Dental practices may be eligible for the Discretionary Grant Scheme in England. This has made up to £617m of additional funding available to Local Authorities to enable them to make payments of up to £25,000 to businesses which are ineligible the existing grants schemes. Local Authorities have received guidance regarding which kinds of businesses should be considered a priority. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses according to local economic need, so long as businesses meet the following criteria:

- They face ongoing fixed building-related costs
- They can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to COVID-19
- They have fewer than 50 employees;
- They were trading on or before 11th March

Dental practices, along with other businesses, may also benefit from a range of support measures including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)
- 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 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

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.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

Nadia Whittome:**[52635]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend eligibility for the (a) Small Business Grants Fund and (b) business rates relief to include private dental practices.

Jesse Norman:

A business with a property that on 11 March 2020 was eligible for Small Business Rate Relief Scheme or the Rural Rate Relief Scheme, will be eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF). Any enquiries on eligibility for, or provision of, the SBGF should be directed to the relevant local authority. There are currently no plans to change eligibility criteria for the schemes. However, officials are keeping in close contact with local authorities to monitor and understand how the schemes are being implemented.

A range of further measures to support all businesses including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as dentists, 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.

■ **Directors: Coronavirus**

Andrew Bowie: [\[54215\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including directors of small and medium limited companies who draw their income through dividends in eligibility for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

Ben Lake: [\[55001\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support directors of limited companies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ben Lake: [\[55002\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a separate covid-19 support scheme for directors of limited companies.

Jesse Norman:

Those who pay themselves a salary through their own company are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The CJRS is available to employers, including owner-managers, and individuals paying themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme are eligible. Where furloughed directors, including companies with a sole director, need to carry out particular duties to fulfil their statutory obligations, they may do so provided it is no more than would reasonably be judged necessary for that purpose.

Dividends are not covered by the CJRS or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Income from dividends is a return on investment in the company, rather than wages. Under current reporting mechanisms it is not possible for HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to distinguish between dividends derived from an individual's own company and dividends from other sources, and between dividends in lieu of employment income and as returns from other corporate activity.

The Government has worked with stakeholders and carefully considered the case for providing a new system for those who pay themselves through dividends. However, targeting additional support for those who pay their wages via dividends is much more complex than existing income support schemes. Unlike announced support schemes, which use information HMRC already holds, it would require owner-managers to make a claim and submit information that HMRC could not efficiently or

consistently verify to ensure payments were made to eligible companies, for eligible activity.

The Government has heard the suggestion made that HMRC could adopt a 'pay now, claw back later' approach. However, such an approach would be highly resource-intensive to ensure appropriate compliance, and there is a high risk that incorrect or fraudulent payments could not be recovered, ultimately at the cost of UK taxpayers.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said there will be no further extension or changes to the SEISS or CJRS. However, other support is available. The CJRS and SEISS continue to be just two elements of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. 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.

■ **Directors: Pay**

Sam Tarry: [\[52599\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people who are directors of limited companies received total payments, including dividends, of (a) under £10,000, (b) £10,000-£20,000, (c) £20,000-£30,000, (d) £30,000-£40,000, (e) £40,000-£50,000, (f) £50,000-£100,000 and (g) £100,000 and above, in the last 12 month period for which figures are available.

Sam Tarry: [\[52600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people who are directors of limited companies received total dividend payments of (a) under £10,000, b) £10,000-£20,000, (c) £20,000-£30,000, (d) £30,000-£40,000, (e) £40,000-£50,000, (f) £50,000-£100,000 and (g) £100,000 and above for the latest 12 month period for which figures are available.

Sam Tarry: [\[52601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) median and (b) mean payment, including dividends, was to directors of limited companies in the last 12 month period for which figures are available.

Jesse Norman:

Individuals can report that they are a director on their Self-Assessment return. HMRC have provided data based on these individuals for the 2018/19 tax year, but this will not account for late filing behaviour, those who have chosen not report this information on the form, or those who do not need to complete Self-Assessment returns. Based on this data, HMRC have estimated responses to the questions, rounded to the nearest 10,000 individuals.

52599:

TOTAL INCOME REPORTED	NUMBER OF DIRECTORS
Less than £10k	150,000
£10-20k	340,000
£20-30k	260,000
£30-40k	230,000
£40-50k	310,000
£50-100k	330,000
Greater than £100k	170,000

52600:

DIVIDENDS INCOME REPORTED	NUMBER OF DIRECTORS
Less than £10k	900,000
£10-20k	250,000
£20-30k	200,000
£30-40k	220,000
£40-50k	70,000
£50-100k	120,000
Greater than £100k	40,000

52601:

The mean income of directors based on HMRC data is £59,000, and the median is £36,400, both rounded to the nearest £100.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson:

[52493]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to improve economic opportunities across the UK after the lifting of lockdown restrictions due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

We recognise that every region and community will be feeling the impacts of this crisis. This is why the Government has put in place unprecedented support to protect workers and businesses across the country. As we move forward, the government will continue to engage local leaders and to level up opportunity across the UK.

■ English Language: Education

Catherine West:

[52302]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to extend the (a) business rates holiday and (b) grants for the tourism, retail and leisure sectors during the covid-19 outbreak to the English language teaching sector.

Kemi Badenoch:

Businesses in England involved in teaching English language may be eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) of £10,000 per property, which is available to businesses in receipt of small business rate relief (SBRR) or rural rate relief (RRR). Alternatively, such businesses may be eligible for the Discretionary Grant Scheme in England. This has made up to £617m of additional funding available to Local Authorities to enable them to make payments of up to £25,000 to businesses not eligible for the other grant schemes. Local Authorities have received guidance regarding which kinds of businesses should be considered a priority. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses according to local economic need, so long as businesses meet the following criteria:

- They face ongoing fixed building-related costs
- They can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to COVID-19
- They have fewer than 50 employees;
- They were trading on or before 11th March

The English language teaching sector may also benefit from a range of support measures introduced by the government. The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, and how to apply -<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

■ Ferries: Coronavirus

Karl Turner:

[51895]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to Question 46626 on Ferries: Coronavirus, whether the support awarded by the Department for Transport to freight operators is backdated to 24 April 2020; and if he will list those operators in receipt of public support under those contracts.

Kemi Badenoch:

Support is being provided to maintain capacity on 16 critical freight routes (listed below) to help ensure critical goods can move freely. These routes are run by the following 6 operators: Brittany Ferries; DFDS; Eurotunnel; P&O; Seatruck; and Stena. Contracts with these operators are in place for 9 weeks from 11 May and are not backdated.

Route:

- Portsmouth-Santander
- Portsmouth-Cherbourg
- Poole-Bilbao
- Dover-Dunkerque
- Dover-Calais
- Folkestone-Coquelles
- Cairnryan-Larne
- Tilbury-Zeebrugge
- Teesport-Europoort
- Hull-Europoort
- Hull-Zeebrugge
- Heysham-Warrenpoint
- Rotterdam-Killingholme
- Cairnryan-Belfast
- Harwich-Rotterdam
- Harwich-Hoek van Holland

■ Government Departments: Assets

Ian Lavery:

[51975]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will list all assets owned by the Government and their latest estimated value in Wansbeck constituency.

Jesse Norman:

A comprehensive list of assets owned by the Government is not available at parliamentary constituency level. The Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) reports the cumulative value of assets owned by central and local government at the national level. This data is collated through returns from local authorities and central government departments. The Whole of Government Accounts is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/whole-of-government-accounts>

■ Holiday Accommodation: Taxation

Ian Blackford:

[52067]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to review the tax status of furnished holiday lets.

Jesse Norman:

Furnished Holiday Lettings (FHLs) make an important contribution to local economies across the UK, especially in coastal and rural areas. To support FHLs in England during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has provided full business

rates relief and grants of up to £25,000 per business. Consequential funding has been provided to the devolved administrations in line with the Barnett formula.

The Government does not currently plan to review the tax status of FHLs, which are well established and provide equitable tax outcomes.

However, the Government keeps all tax policy, including the tax status of FHLs, under review, including as part of the response to COVID-19.

■ Infrastructure

Alan Brown:

[\[52168\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the National Infrastructure Strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Infrastructure is central to the Government's economic strategy; it is essential for jobs, growth and supporting a high quality of life. The Government will set out further detail on its longer-term ambitions in the National Infrastructure Strategy later this year.

■ Local Press: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[51989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to introduce emergency business rates relief for local news publishers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Office space occupied by local newspapers can benefit from a £1,500 annual business rates discount, extended to 2025. A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, has also been made available. For example, the Government has launched the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms keep people in employment, and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. In addition, the Government brought forward the implementation date of the zero rate of VAT for e-publications to 1 May 2020.

■ Medicine: Research

Derek Thomas:

[\[52308\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on medical research charities in the UK.

Derek Thomas:

[\[52309\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to support medical research charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

Medical research charities are an important part of the UK's world-class R&D ecosystem and are contributing directly to combating Covid-19. We know that many

charities are struggling and the government is closely monitoring the impacts of Covid-19 on the sector.

Medical research charities can access the comprehensive support the government has made available for employers and businesses. Under these measures, charities can defer their VAT bills and pay no business rates for their shops next year. All charities are eligible for the job retention scheme and the right answer for many charities will be to furlough their employees with the Government paying 80% of wages. Charities are eligible for the Coronavirus Business Interruptions Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, and the Bounce Back Loans Scheme. Registered charities are now exempt from the requirement that 50% of the applicant's income must be derived from its Trading Activity.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[51658\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to respond to the letter sent on 8 April 2020 regarding the hon. Member for North Durham's constituent, Julie Mullen.

Kemi Badenoch:

Unfortunately the Treasury is not able to locate correspondence sent on 8 April 2020 regarding the Honourable Member for North Durham's constituent, Julie Mullen. Treasury officials have contacted the Honourable Members constituency office requesting a copy is sent by email.

■ **Off-payroll Working**

Sir Paul Beresford:

[\[51534\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that (a) have been and (b) will be lost in the UK as a result of the planned IR35 off-payroll roll-out.

Jesse Norman:

The off-payroll working rules are designed to ensure that someone working like an employee, but through a company, pays similar levels of tax to other employees. It is fair that individuals who work in a similar way should pay broadly the same amount of tax. The rules do not apply to the self-employed or stop anyone working through their own company.

The Government has not seen any evidence that indicates an overall change in demand for the services and skills that contractors offer. Independent research on the impacts of the reform in the public sector showed that it did not reduce market flexibility or impact use of contingent labour. This research will be updated and shared with parliament before the reform applies in April 2021. Furthermore, at Budget 2018 the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) did not judge the upcoming reform to have any specific macroeconomic impacts.

The Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) published in July 2019 sets out HMRC's assessment that the reform is expected to impact 170,000 individuals working through their own company, who would be employed if engaged directly. Those who are complying with the existing rules should feel little impact. The TIIN can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020/rules-for-off-payroll-working-from-april-2020>.

■ Off-payroll Working: Coronavirus

Sir Paul Beresford:

[51532]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether workers covered by IR35 rules are eligible for (a) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, (b) the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (c) other financial support schemes established by the Government to support people facing loss of work and income as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has announced a package of support for individuals to deal with lost income and the costs of absence due to COVID-19. For those within the off-payroll working rules working in the public sector, the Government expects many public sector organisations to continue to pay staff and not to furlough them.

Owner-managers paying themselves a salary through PAYE can benefit from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). For companies with a sole director, directors can continue to undertake their statutory duties while furloughed and still be eligible for the CJRS, as long as they do not work beyond these duties. They can use the CJRS portal to claim for 80% of usual monthly wage costs up to £2,500 a month, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and minimum automatic enrolment employer pension contributions for that wage.

Individuals who are employed by a Personal Service Company (PSC) are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) on the same terms as any other employee. PSCs which are eligible and make payments under SSP as a result of COVID-19 will be entitled to a rebate where they meet the criteria of that scheme. Those not eligible for SSP (e.g. the self-employed and very low earners) will be able to receive support through the benefits system.

SMEs may also have access to support through the temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). CBILS supports SMEs with loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance of up to £5 million, for up to six years. In addition, the Government has created the Bounce-Back Loans Scheme, which is designed to ensure that the smallest businesses can access loans of up to £50,000 in a matter of just days. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.businesssupport.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support/.

Individuals who have paid sufficient National Insurance Contributions, including through multiple jobs, will be entitled to new style Employment and Support Allowance. If they have not made sufficient contributions, they can apply for Universal

Credit. These individuals will benefit from the Budget announcements to remove the seven day wait in new style Employment and Support Allowance and, if they are self-employed, the Minimum Income Floor in Universal Credit.

Sir Paul Beresford:

[51533]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on workers covered by IR35 rules.

Jesse Norman:

While no specific impact assessment has been made of the potential effect of COVID-19 on individuals affected by the off-payroll working rules (commonly known as IR35), the Government has recently announced that the reform to the off-payroll working rules for people contracting their services to large or medium-sized organisations outside the public sector will be delayed for one year, from 6 April 2020 until 6 April 2021. This is part of the additional support the Government is providing for businesses and individuals to deal with the economic impacts of COVID-19.

It is right for the Government to do whatever it can to support all parts of the labour market at this time. The Government remains committed to introducing this policy in order to address the unfairness of non-compliance with the existing off-payroll working rules. However, it also recognises that the reform is a significant change for both businesses and contractors. Delaying the reform will support them, as they will not need to implement and adjust to the reform until next year.

The Government very much values the contribution of flexible workers to the UK economy, but it is also under an obligation to ensure fairness between individuals who work in a similar way. The Government has published a factsheet which provides further information on the reform: <https://bit.ly/2Uu50k8>

■ P and O Ferries: Coronavirus

Karl Turner:

[51907]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 May 2020 to Question 46622, how much P&O Ferries has received from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to date.

Jesse Norman:

Applications for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) opened on Monday 20 April. By midnight 31 May 2020, 1.1m employers had submitted claims to HMRC representing 8.7m furloughed employments and £17.5bn. HMRC do not comment on identifiable taxpayers.

■ Personal Income: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[51586]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's income support schemes provide adequate support for individuals who rely on two or more incomes from self-employment and formal employment.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has announced an unprecedented package of support for those adversely affected by COVID-19.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) continues to be one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world as the economy reopens. The self-employed are very diverse and have a wide mix of turnover and profits, with monthly and annual variations even in normal times, and in some cases with substantial alternative forms of income too. 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 targeted at those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employed income.

The Chancellor has said there will be no further extension or changes to the SEISS. However, individuals receiving more than half of their income from other sources may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented financial support provided by the Government. The SEISS and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) continue to be just two elements of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses, including bounce back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increases to the standard allowance of Universal Credit and the basic element of Working Tax Credit, mortgage holidays and other business support grants.

Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:**[\[55059\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons the Barnett Consequentials for Northern Ireland were not applied to emergency funding that was allocated to service providers of victims and survivors of domestic abuse in England and Wales.

Steve Barclay:

As part of the response to COVID-19, the UK government has announced £39 million of funding to support victims of domestic abuse. The Barnett formula has been applied to this funding and, as a result of this, the Northern Ireland Executive will receive £1.0 million of additional funding.

Revenue and Customs: Disability**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[52132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 29 November 2017 to Question 115096 on Revenue and Customs: Disability, what recent assessment he has made of whether HMRC's Regional Centre in 3 Glass Wharf, Bristol meets the 2018 edition of British Standard 8300.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[52133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 29 November 2017 to Question 115096 on Revenue and Customs: Disability, how many HMRC staff have been granted Health Related Special Leave because they are awaiting reasonable

adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to be made at the HMRC Regional Centre in 3 Glass Wharf, Bristol.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[52134\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 29 November 2017 to Question 115096 on Revenue and Customs: Disability, how many HMRC staff have been granted Health Related Special Leave (formerly Disability Adjustment Leave) because they are awaiting reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to be made at the HMRC Regional Centre in 3 Glass Wharf, Bristol, since September 2019.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC aim to deliver excellent workplaces for all of their staff. This means allowing people to access and work in their buildings confidently, independently and with dignity regardless of their age, disability, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

3 Glass Wharf, Bristol meets building regulations required by law. Building Standard 8300 (BS8300) brings together a further range of inclusive design guidance, with the previous 2009 edition being revised in 2018. The 2009 version sought provision well beyond those required by building regulations, with the 2018 edition going still further. Planning permission was granted and construction commenced before the 2018 revision.

Standards are considered voluntary guidance, without the force of law, and are not retrospective. However, HMRC have decided to go further than what is required by law and have additional reasonable work planned at 3 Glass Wharf, beyond the 2009 version, in relation to the 2018 edition of BS8300.

HMRC have a number of policies and processes in place that are designed to ensure the needs of colleagues requiring adjustments are met. Health Related Special Leave is one element. As a person's health and medical conditions are sensitive, HMRC's HR systems do not record the reason for granting special leave. The reason for an individual's Special Leave is only recorded by their manager and is not collated as part of a data set.

■ **Riot Control Weapons: USA**

John Spellar:

[\[54854\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value was of (a) tear gas, (b) rubber bullets and (c) riot shields exported to the US in each of the last five years.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly, as a National Statistic: the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics.

The trade data collected does not enable HMRC to distinguish exports of tear gas from other spring, air or gas guns and pistols or truncheons. The trade data collected also does not enable HMRC to distinguish exports of rubber bullets from other ammunition and projectiles or riot shields from other plastic articles.

However, there is aggregated trade data available for the goods and periods requested on the uktradeinfo website, under 'Build your own data tables'. The site also contains a 'Help' function with information on how to extract trade data.

Trade data relating to all spring, air and gas guns and pistols and truncheons exported to the US can be found using commodity code 9304000000. Trade data relating to the value of all ammunition and projectiles can be searched for using commodity code 9306909000. Trade data relating to riot shields and other plastic articles can be found using commodity code 3926909790.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[51545\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have (a) submitted claims to and (b) received grants from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, broken down by (i) local authority and (ii) parliamentary constituency.

Jesse Norman:

Applications for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) opened on 13 May 2020. By midnight 31 May 2020, 2.5 million customers had submitted claims to HMRC representing £7.2 billion.

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.

Steve McCabe:

[\[51572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what guidance he can provide to people who require support but who are ineligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme as a result of their public sector pension.

Jesse Norman:

The Government does not provide targeted COVID-19 assistance for people ineligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme as a result of their public sector pension.

The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency. It has prioritised measures that can be implemented quickly and effectively, and that benefit as many individuals as possible. 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 State Pension has been uprated by the highest of average earnings growth, price inflation or 2.5%; an approach known as the Triple Lock. Since 2010, the value of the State Pension has increased by £1,903.20 a year. The Government provides other support for older people, such as Winter Fuel Payments, free eye tests and NHS prescriptions, and free bus passes.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[51992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 May 2020 to Question 46718 on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, when he plans to announce the result of the review.

Jesse Norman:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme on 29 May, and eligible individuals may now qualify for a second and final grant. This means the UK continues to have one of the most generous self-employed COVID-19 support schemes in the world as the economy reopens.

The extension of the scheme means that eligible individuals whose businesses are adversely affected by COVID-19 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. This is in line with changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme as the economy reopens and the eligibility criteria remain the same.

Owen Thompson:

[\[52216\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to provide financial support to self-employed people that are without work after the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme ends on 31 May 2020.

Jesse Norman:

On 29 May, the Chancellor announced that eligible individuals will be able to claim a second and final taxable grant when the SEISS reopens for 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 another single instalment covering three months' worth of profits, and capped at £6,570 in total.

Stuart Anderson:

[\[52498\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, what support he plans to provide for self-employed people who (a) do not have tax returns for the financial year 2018-19 and (b) are not eligible for universal credit.

Jesse Norman:

It has not been possible to include those who began trading after the 2018-19 tax year in the SEISS. This was a very difficult decision and it was taken for practical reasons. As the Chancellor highlighted when announcing the SEISS, in order to ensure that the scheme is deliverable, only those who are already in self-employment and had a tax return for 2018-19 are able to apply. Unlike for employees, self-employed income is not reported monthly, but at the end of each tax year on the individual's Income Tax Self Assessment return. This means that the most reliable and up-to-date record of self-employed income is from 2018-19 tax returns.

The Government recognises that those who started trading more recently will not have submitted a tax return for the 2018-19 tax year, and it has considered

alternative approaches. This included using tax returns for 2019-20, now that these can be submitted to HMRC.

However, there would be significant risks for the public purse if the Government relied on 2019-20 returns for the SEISS, as this would create an opportunity for fraudulent activity.

Sam Tarry: [\[52597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether self-assessment tax return forms that were amended between the period 26 March 2020 to 20 April 2020 will be accepted in consideration for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS); and whether discretion will be used to ensure that people who made amendments to their self-assessment forms due to genuine error will receive the appropriate support from SEISS.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is designed to be delivered quickly and so is based on information HMRC already hold. This also provides some protection against fraud and abuse.

The SEISS is governed by a Direction issued by the Treasury. That Direction clearly sets out the parameters of the scheme, including the eligibility and payment calculation rules. The 2018-19 return must have been filed by 23 April 2020, and no amendments made after 6pm on 26 March will be taken into account. The SEISS makes no provision to accept later returns or amendments, for example on reasonable excuse or error grounds. If claimants feel HMRC have got their eligibility decision wrong they may ask for a review, following the process set out on GOV.UK.

■ **Social Services: VAT Zero Rating**

Munira Wilson: [\[52532\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a zero VAT rate for the provision of social care services.

Jesse Norman:

Many care services provided by charities, public bodies and regulated private welfare institutions to elderly people are exempt from VAT, meaning no VAT is charged on the care service. Organisations offering such services are not required to charge VAT where they are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

There are no plans to change the VAT treatment of such care services at present.

■ **Solicitors: Coronavirus**

Munira Wilson: [\[52523\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a grant scheme for solicitors firms which are ineligible for business rates relief and do not qualify for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme or Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

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. Solicitors firms may be eligible for the Discretionary Grant Scheme in England. This has made up to £617m of additional funding available to Local Authorities to enable them to make payments of up to £25,000 to businesses which have been excluded from the existing grants schemes. Local Authorities have received guidance regarding which kinds of businesses should be considered a priority. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses according to local economic need, so long as businesses meet the following criteria:

- They face ongoing fixed building-related costs
- They can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to COVID-19
- They have fewer than 50 employees;
- They were trading on or before 11th March

Solicitors firms, along with other businesses, may also benefit from the other government support measures. The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, and how to apply -<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

■ Solicitors: Self-employed**Munira Wilson:****[52525]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of self-employed solicitors who exceed an average trading profit of £50,000 per year.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC's Annual Personal Incomes Statistics series includes information on Self-employment income assessable to tax.

Table 3.9 shows there were 57,000 sources of self-employment in the "Legal & Accounting Activities" industry group where income was over £50,000 in the 2017-18 tax year. The Personal Incomes Statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-incomes-tables-31-to-311-316-and-317-for-the-tax-year-2017-to-2018>

■ Stamp Duties: Coronavirus**Alberto Costa:****[52151]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a stamp duty holiday for people purchasing new homes as a means of stimulating the economy after the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

Vital measures to control the spread of COVID-19, such as social distancing, have resulted in a drop in property transactions. From 13 May in England, viewings can once again be held as long as social distancing measures remain in place, and people can move house safely.

The Government does not currently have any plans to change the amount of Stamp Duty on property purchases. However, the Government keeps all tax policy under review, including as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ **Taxation: Domicil**

Sam Tarry: [52602]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many UK residents claimed non-domicile tax status in the UK in each of the last five years.

Sam Tarry: [52603]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the value of the forfeiture of tax revenue as a result of non-domiciled residents remaining in the UK after the 60-day covid-19 extension period.

Sam Tarry: [52604]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the average annual income of non-domiciled residents in the UK.

Sam Tarry: [52605]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the value of the forfeiture of tax revenue from non-domiciled residents that remained in the UK for the 60-day covid-19 extension period, who are exempt from paying the higher tax rate as a result of exceptional circumstances.

Jesse Norman:

The number of UK residents who claimed non-domicile tax status in the UK in each of the last five years can be found in Table 1 of 'Statistics on Non-domiciled Taxpayers in the UK,' available on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-non-domiciled-taxpayers-in-the-uk>.

COVID-19 measures and guidance related to the Statutory Residence Test (SRT) have been estimated to have a negligible cost to the exchequer. This is because they will in most cases preserve what an individual's tax residence determination would be in the absence of COVID-19. Individuals who utilise these changes in 2020-21 will, where necessary, be required to declare this in their Self-Assessment returns which are due in January 2022.

■ Tourism: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[51585]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to mitigate the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) coach holiday sector and (b) holiday coach companies.

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. Coach companies, along with other businesses, may benefit from a range of support measures including:

- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)
- The Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
- The Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS)
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises
- A Discretionary Grant Fund for Local Authorities in England to make grants payments of up to £25,000 to businesses excluded from the existing grants schemes
- VAT deferral for up to 12 months
- The Time To Pay scheme, through which businesses 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

The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible, and how to apply - <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

■ Travel: Insurance

Tracey Crouch:

[54883]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the insurance industry on the validity of travel insurance for holidays cancelled as a result of the new quarantine regulations due to the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector to understand and influence its contribution to handling this unprecedented situation.

Travel insurance typically applies only for losses that cannot be recovered from elsewhere, that is, after any refunds from airlines, travel, or accommodation providers. Although insurance against travel disruption due to pandemics is typically

included in travel insurance policies, customers should first contact travel providers or accommodation providers for reimbursement. In the next instance, credit card providers would provide a refund under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 if the payment was made by credit card and cost was over £100 per unit.

If there is no still recoverable cost from these sources, a travel insurance claim may be applicable where the policy covers UK travel. Some policies will only cover foreign travel, but more comprehensive policies will also cover UK travel.

Travel insurance policies differ so, if in doubt, customers should speak to their insurer or check the terms and conditions of their policy.

We have discussed with insurers the importance of insurance cover for Covid-19 in restoring consumers with the confidence to travel again. Firms assure us that they will look to extend cover again where and when they can. They are monitoring announcements by Government and reviewing their position as the situation evolves. We will continue to monitor this situation closely.

■ Treasury: ICT

Martyn Day:

[\[52234\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reduce the amount of manual processing on paper it carries out and (b) make those processes digital.

Kemi Badenoch:

Treasury is in a continual process of reducing the paper it consumes by digitising processes. We have digital tools for managing fiscal events and correspondence and the vast majority of the departments' work is carried out digitally. Printing is restricted using "follow me" printing and the Treasury also has use of a reprographics department. All processes within the department are digital, though some still require wet ink completion.

■ Veterinary Services: Coronavirus

Munira Wilson:

[\[52526\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending business rates relief to veterinary practices during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

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. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities on eligible properties. A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, 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.

Munira Wilson:

[52527]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a part-time furlough scheme for veterinary practices during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Chancellor has announced that, from 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees who have been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grant for the hours not worked.

There will not be a minimum furlough period, but employers will need to agree any flexible furlough arrangements with employees, and when claiming the CJRS grant will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week.

Munira Wilson:

[52528]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a grant scheme for veterinary practices during the covid-19 outbreak.

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. Veterinary practices may be eligible for the Discretionary Grant Scheme in England. This has made up to £617m of additional funding available to Local Authorities to enable them to make payments of up to £25,000 to businesses which have been excluded from the existing grants schemes. Local Authorities have received guidance regarding which kinds of businesses should be considered a priority. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses according to local economic need, so long as businesses meet the following criteria:

- They face ongoing fixed building-related costs
- They can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to COVID-19
- They have fewer than 50 employees;
- They were trading on or before 11th March

Veterinary practices, along with other businesses, may also benefit from a range of support measures introduced by the government. 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.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality and Human Rights Commission: Public Appointments

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[49848\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the diversity of the composition of the commissioners of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; and if she will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The current diversity of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Board of Commissioners is set out in the table below;

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: BOARD DIVERSITY

	Number	%
Total Members on Board	10 (1 Chair; 1 Deputy Chair; 1 'Scotland' Commissioner; 6 Commissioners; 1 CEO/commissioner ex officio)	100%
Female	7	70%
Male	3	30%
BAME	1	10%
Disabled	2	20%

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance: Coronavirus

Mr Clive Betts: [\[54856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if the Government will be making an additional payment to those in receipt of carer's allowance of £460 to mirror the Scottish Government's Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement payment.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Scottish Government uses its powers under devolution to pay carers, regardless of their means, extra amounts through the Carer's Allowance Supplement.

The UK Government has taken a different approach and chosen to focus extra support on carers on the lowest incomes. For example, carers on Universal Credit can receive around an additional £1950 a year through the Carers Element. And they will also benefit from the extra £1040 a year that has been added to the standard allowance in Universal Credit.

■ **Disability: Coronavirus**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[52586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the level of (a) needs of and (b) support required by disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Hayes:

[\[54979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on disabled people.

Justin Tomlinson:

We continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people using existing and new data sources. There will however be a period until the data needed to fully assess the impact becomes available.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is publishing a rolling programme of data and articles relating to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. On the 24th April 2020 ONS also published 'Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain'. The analysis gives insight into the experience of disabled adults, and where there might be issues that arise for some that differ from those of non-disabled people. This showed that, currently, a lower proportion of disabled people than non-disabled people were worried about transport and caring issues as well as aspects of household finances and work.

That is why we are actively working on policies to provide specific employment support for disabled people both in and out of work. This includes initiatives such as Access to Work (ATW), Disability Confident, Work and Health Programme (WHP) and the new Intensive Personalised Employment Support Programme (IPES), alongside investment in a programme of trials and tests to identify effective models of health and employment support for people with health conditions or disabilities.

Helen Hayes:

[\[54978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to support disabled people affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is fully committed to supporting disabled people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. We are ensuring that disabled people continue to have access to disability benefits and other financial support, the food and essential goods that they need, as well as accessible communications and guidance during the Covid-19

outbreak. The Government continues to support disabled employees to access assistive technology and other forms of support they need to remain in work

■ Disability: Social Distancing

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[52057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he plans to take to raise public awareness about the problems faced by people with sight loss and other hidden disabilities, who may find it hard to follow social distancing rules.

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[52513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to reduce the stigma faced by people with sight loss and other hidden disabilities who may find it difficult to follow social distancing rules.

Justin Tomlinson:

We recognise that some people with disabilities face particular difficulty in social distancing, or are impacted by the reaction of others to their inability to socially distance. We are considering how we ensure that disabled people are able to socially distance in order to protect themselves from Coronavirus and from adverse attention from people who perceive that they are not adhering to guidelines on social distancing. All equality and discrimination laws and obligations continue to apply during the Corona Virus pandemic.

■ Employment: Mental Health

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[53548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to businesses to provide training to employees on the early signs of poor mental health in the workplace.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers, published in October 2017, set out a series of recommendations. At its heart is an appeal to employers to adopt the “core standards”, which would make a real difference to the mental health support to people at work. A Leadership Council is driving adoption by sharing best practice and encouraging peer to peer conversations.

There is limited evidence on whether financial incentives can make a difference to adoption of health and wellbeing measures at work. We are supporting the evaluation of a trial led by the West Midlands Combined Authority testing whether financial incentives can be used to incentivise SME employers to take action along a health and wellbeing programme for SMEs. Final results will be published in due course.

Through our Challenge Fund we have funded a range of initiatives to help people with mental health and Musculoskeletal conditions stay in work. The Fund, which drew to a close in April 2020, funded 19 Initiatives to learn from different approaches that supported both individuals and employers. The learning will be used to inform

future policies that are aimed at helping people with mental health and/or musculoskeletal conditions to retain employment.

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

John Healey:

[54001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria are used by the Health and Safety Executive to trigger on-site inspections of businesses accused or suspected of breaking covid-19 workplace safety regulations.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 8 June 2020]: Physical inspections of premises, whilst an important part of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) work, are one part of a much wider approach taken by HSE. Members of the public and employees can submit a concern to HSE in relation to unsatisfactory conditions or risk control measures in the workplace; concerns come into the organisation in a variety of ways, with most arriving either via telephone or the online form on HSE's website.

Concerns received are triaged and classified either red, amber or green; those classified green are largely dealt with remotely by HSE's Concerns and Advice Team, whilst amber and red concerns are passed to HSE's field teams for further investigation

■ National Insurance Contributions: Females

Paul Girvan:

[52371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the Government's timeframe is for back-dating payments to women who were not awarded automatic national insurance contributions top-ups by her Department.

Guy Opperman:

Any women who believe they are being underpaid State Pension should contact the Department. Details on how to do this through the Pension Service are available on the gov.uk website.

The Department is aware of a number of cases where individuals have been underpaid State Pension. We are checking for further cases and any that are found will be looked at in line with the relevant legislation.

Those who are already getting a State Pension based on their own National Insurance contributions must make a separate claim for the top up if their husband reached State Pension age before 17 March 2008. The top up payments can be backdated for a maximum of 12 months before the date the claim is made. If the husband reached State Pension age on or after 17 March 2008, a separate claim for the top up is not needed and it can be paid from the date of entitlement.

■ Occupational Pensions: Coronavirus

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[51611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people that (a) opted-out and (b) ceased active membership of auto-enrolment pension schemes since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[51613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employees have reduced their contributions into auto-enrolment schemes since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

Key to supporting both businesses and pension savers is the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which offers an unprecedented package of support for businesses. Under the CJRS grants have been available to employers to support business by covering up to 80 percent of a furloughed worker's regular salary, capped at £2,500 per month. Additionally, the grants also cover statutory minimum employer pension contributions into registered pension schemes on behalf of furloughed employees.

On 29th May the Chancellor announced how changes to the CJRS will be phased in prior to closure of the scheme at the end of October. The changes provide flexibility from July when furloughed workers will be able to return to work part-time. From August employers will be asked to pay employer NICs and pensions contributions for their workers.

Helping people save for their futures remains a key priority for Government, and employers are still required to comply with obligations under automatic enrolment to enrol employees into workplace pensions and then make contributions. We have asked employers to share the costs of paying the wages of furloughed workers and starting with the costs of employer national insurance and pension contributions is a simple and fair way to do that.

By easing the burden of workplace pensions for employers, we are helping them better manage costs during the crisis whilst supporting long-term saving for the future.

The Department does not yet have suitable data to make an assessment of the number of employees who have reduced their contributions, or have stopped saving, since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The last assessment by the Department of opt-out and cessation was published in our 2019 Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report, when we estimated that 0.76 per cent of savers in the first quarter of the 2019/20 financial year made an active decision to stop saving.

The Department continues to monitor Automatic Enrolment using a range of sources such as the annual Workplace Pension Participation Statistics, which will next be

published on 18th June covering workplace pension participation and contributions up to April 2019.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883289/automatic-enrolment-evaluation-report-2019.pdf

■ Pension Credit: Females

Amy Callaghan:

[52508]

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

Guy Opperman:

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

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

■ Pension Wise

Neil Coyle:

[52040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on when the provisions under the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018 on usage of Pension Wise guidance will be implemented.

Guy Opperman:

Existing Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) rules require firms to signpost to their customers the availability of pensions guidance via Pension Wise. These include, for example, rules requiring firms to issue wake-up packs, designed to be one of the main sources of information for consumers about their options for accessing their pension savings.

Furthermore, the Money and Pension Service (MaPS) has undertaken trials to gather evidence on the possible ways to help encourage more people to take Pension Wise guidance before accessing their pension, fulfilling the requirement upon Government and the FCA set out in the Financial Guidance and Claims Act 2018.

We are now considering the outcome of the initial findings from the trials. However, we will not pre-emptively reach any conclusions. Once MaPS, with Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), publish an evaluation report of the trials in Summer 2020, we will use the evidence provided from the trials to help inform and assess the impact of the trials and conduct a consultation prior to implementing any regulations. For the

FCA this also includes a duty to consult on the proposed rules. The due processes that DWP must take to lay regulations and the FCA must take to make rules will be followed.

The Secretary of State has not had discussions with the FCA in relation to this matter, however the FCA, DWP and MaPS are working closely together on this to progress the rules and regulations in a coordinated and timely fashion following the publication of the evaluation report.

■ Pensions: Advisory Services

Ms Angela Eagle: [\[51612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have booked a Pension Wise guidance session since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Neil Coyle: [\[52038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of people using the Pension Wise guidance service prior to accessing their pension savings.

Guy Opperman:

Pension Wise have been successful in increasing demand for guidance appointments year on year from a standing start in 2015. During the 2019-2020 financial year there were 205,643 available appointments.

Since the 11th March 2020, the Money and Pension Service have been collating Covid-19 figures. From this point up until 2nd June 2020, 21,663 bookings for Pension Wise guidance sessions have been made. The Money and Pension Service has successfully adapted its methods for delivering Pension Wise guidance during the Covid-19 outbreak to ensure that it can maintain its service. As face-to-face appointments have not been possible at this time, the Money and Pension Service have focussed on digital and telephone delivery channels to maintain levels of service. This has involved working proactively with customers who were booked for a face-to-face session and offering channel shift to ensure that support is still given to meet customer needs.

Neil Coyle: [\[52039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to increase the availability and access of impartial pension advice and guidance for pensioners before they make decisions on their financial situation in retirement.

Guy Opperman:

The Money and Pensions Service (MAPS) have a national goal to have 5 million more people understanding enough to plan for, and in, later life. MAPS are working with a wide range of organisations across industry and consumer groups to harness the collective efforts to reach this ambitious target by 2030. MAPS are working across a multitude of different channels to ensure that they are driving take up of Pension Wise guidance.

<https://moneyandpensionsservice.org.uk/uk-strategy-for-financial-wellbeing/>

For example, MAPS recently ran trials to test different ways of delivering a nudge to guidance at the point someone wishes to access their pension pot, with a view to making receiving guidance a social norm. MAPS, with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), will publish an evaluation report of the trials in Summer 2020 and the results will assist the FCA and the Government in making rules and regulations.

Furthermore, recent FCA rules changes mean that from 1 November 2019, providers are required to include strengthened messaging about Pension Wise guidance in the 'wake-up' packs they send to their customers in the run-up to retirement. Providers are now also required to send the packs more frequently. The FCA's approach was informed by behavioural research, which showed a material improvement in customer contact with Pension Wise.

Pension Wise also run successful advertising campaigns across multiple channels, as well as working with employers nationally and locally to engage with their employees at their place of work.

■ Pensions: Fraud

Ms Angela Eagle:

[51610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential increase in pension scams since the start of covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

To assess and respond to the impacts of Covid-19 on the pension industry and pension savers, DWP has established a cross-government and regulator group and has been working with the pension industry to understand emerging impacts.

This group is informed by a separate data monitoring group that co-ordinates the aggregation of data from a range of sources, including government, regulators and pension industry bodies, to identify trends including any increase in pension scams activity.

Data received so far has revealed little evidence of an increase, however it may take time for impacts to materialise. We will of course continue to monitor the situation to assess if there has been any increase in pension scams activity as a result of the crisis.

The PPF, in collaboration with regulators and pensions bodies, recently published a guide, 'COVID-19 and your pension: where to get help', which answers common pension concerns and helps individuals find the right support. This includes guidance for individuals who are concerned about pension scams.

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/covid-19-pensions>

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[51791]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to protect people from pension scams and fraud.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: In these unprecedented times we are committed to protecting people from pension scams and fraud. DWP is working with other Government Departments, the Pension Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority and other industry bodies to raise awareness and to monitor for evidence of an increase in pension related fraudster activity. We will continue to use evidence available, to identify what specific and proportionate measures may be necessary.

Government has introduced measures to tackle pension scams following the December 2016 Pension Scams: Consultation [link](#). These include making it harder to open fraudulent schemes from 2018, and legislating to introduce a ban on cold calling in relation to pensions in January 2019.

DWP is also bringing forward legislation, through the Pension Schemes Bill which is currently passing through Parliament. These measures will give trustees' assurance they will not be required to make statutory transfer, unless specified conditions are met.

The PPF, in collaboration with regulators and pensions bodies, recently published a guide, 'COVID-19 and your pension: where to get help', which answers common pension concerns and helps individuals find the right support. This includes guidance for individuals who are concerned about pension scams.

<https://www.ppf.co.uk/covid-19-pensions>

Mr Virendra Sharma:**[51792]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the number of pension scams and fraud in each quarter of the last five years.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The Government is committed to protecting people from pension scams and fraud.

The quarterly data on pension scams and fraud does not exist.

Pensioners who suspect they have been a victim of a pension scam or fraud can report to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime. The DWP works with Action Fraud and other members of the police led organisation Project Bloom, which is cross-government and works with industry to monitor and respond to pension frauds, update prevention and respond to these changes.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus**Vicky Foxcroft:****[49768]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what mitigation her Department has put in place to ensure that hospital stays during the covid-19 outbreak period do not affect a person's benefits.

Will Quince:

When a person aged 18 or over is admitted to hospital, any benefits and allowances they are receiving continue to be paid for 28 days.

At that stage, payment of certain benefits and additions may be suspended on the basis that the NHS is responsible for the person's disability-related extra costs and to pay certain benefits in addition would be a duplication of public funds intended for the same purpose. Provided the person's circumstances are unchanged, payment of the benefits and additions in question are reinstated as soon as the person is discharged. There is no need for the person to re-apply for the benefits.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Kate Osamor:**[\[52279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2020 to Question 43082 on the forthcoming Health and Disability Green Paper, for what reason that Answer states that citizens who have undergone disability benefit assessments may not welcome a letter from her Department outlining the proposed reforms to these processes and inviting responses.

Justin Tomlinson:

It is not normal routine practice to directly write to anyone who has come in to contact with relevant government services, to inform them of an upcoming consultation, due to the disproportionate cost involved.

However, it is crucial that we hear from as many of our customers as possible during the consultation to ensure these views can influence change. We will seek to extensively promote the consultation and encourage users to engage with us.

Kate Osamor:[\[52280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what budget has been allocated to the public consultation on the forthcoming health and disability Green Paper.

Justin Tomlinson:

There is not a fixed budget for the public consultation on the forthcoming health and disability Green Paper.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Assessments**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[54982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department's Press release of 16 March 2020, Face-to-face health assessments for benefits suspended amid coronavirus outbreak, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department's temporary change to telephone or paper-based assessments for disability benefit claimants; and what representations her Department has received from (a) organisations and (b) claimants on the effectiveness of that change to the assessment process.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department will be evaluating the effectiveness of telephone assessments, including claimant perception and stakeholder feedback.

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[52251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will extend the temporary suspension of mandatory face-to-face assessments for benefit applications (a) beyond 17 June 2020 and (b) indefinitely.

Justin Tomlinson:

As previously announced, all face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits were suspended from 17 March 2020 for an initial period of three months. We are currently in the process of reviewing this measure in light of the latest public health advice and will confirm next steps as soon as possible.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Coronavirus**Amy Callaghan:**[\[52509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of increasing the basic rate of the state pension during the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet Ministers, but has not had any meetings on this.

The Government remains committed to providing dignity and security in retirement to all pensioners. In April 2020, full amounts of the basic and new State Pensions increased by 3.9%, in line with average earnings growth. This was the highest increase since 2012.

The full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is worth around £700 more in 2020/21 than if it had been uprated by earnings since 2010. That is over £1,900 in cash terms.

Pension Credit provides a safety net for people of State Pension age most in need. It provides a top up for people with a weekly income below £173.75 (for single people) or £265.20 (for couples). On 6th May we introduced an online claim process for Pension Credit in addition to the existing ways of claiming by telephone and by post, making it quicker and easier for people to apply.

■ Universal Credit**Amy Callaghan:**[\[52510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that people are provided with information on the potential effect of making a claim for universal credit claim on the continued receipt of existing benefits.

Will Quince:

The Department has prioritised ensuring people have the information they need to understand the benefits and employment support they may be eligible for, including launching a new website to help people navigate the range of support available and apply for it.

Although DWP cannot advise existing claimants of legacy benefits whether they should claim UC, we actively encourage them to use benefit calculators to check their eligibility for Universal Credit before applying, and have strengthened communications to ensure that people understand that claiming UC will stop existing legacy benefits. This includes adding information to HMRC's Interactive Voice Response for people calling on the phone, and updating GOV.UK pages. We have used the DWP Twitter and Facebook channels to share messages, and have used paid media to ensure we reach millions of people.

The Department continually makes improvements to the UC service in response to feedback and user research. Therefore, on 3 June we introduced a check-through box to remind claimants to check their eligibility before making a claim and to remind them that legacy benefits will cease when the UC claim is submitted.

Neil Coyle:[\[54925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether accounting regulations prevent her Department classifying money provided in universal credit advance payments which are required to be paid back at a later date to be seen as loans.

Will Quince:

Advances are provided for in legislation as payments on account of future entitlement to benefit. They are accounted for accordingly.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Food: Northern Ireland

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, whether he plans that food products consisting of a variety of ingredients will require an Export Health Certificate for each ingredient when shipped from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 June 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Prentis:

The conditions for which composite products (such as a food product containing cheese and potato) require an EHC are outlined by the Commission. The conditions include, but are not limited to, the type of composite product and the amount of animal origin product in the composite, **dependent on negotiations.**

■ Organic Food: Northern Ireland

Theresa Villiers:

[\[51692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to paragraph 33 of CP226 The UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, whether changes will be made to the arrangements for certification of produce as organic which is moved from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 9 June 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Victoria Prentis:

As the Government has set out in the recent Command Paper on the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol, we have always been clear that it makes sense to protect supply chains and that there will need to be some checks to help movements of agri-food from Great Britain (GB) into Northern Ireland (NI), supported by relevant electronic processes. This may include GB organic food producers needing to provide certificates for inspection for their goods on entry into relevant NI ports, **dependent on negotiations.**

The process by which controls are conducted for GB-NI movements, and their frequency, will need to be discussed with the EU in the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee. This will be done within the context of limiting additional controls at NI ports as far as possible. We will actively seek to simplify and minimise electronic documentary requirements where possible.

HOME OFFICE**■ Immigrants: Detainees****Nadia Whittome:****[52636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were detained in immigration detention centres as of 21 May 2020; and for what reasons each of those people has not been released.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 June 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Chris Philp:

Immigration Enforcement is responding to the unique circumstances of the coronavirus outbreak and following the latest guidance from Public Health England. We continue to remove people through available commercial routes.

Statistics relating to COVID-19 and the immigration system can be viewed by accessing the following link.

The Home Office also publish quarterly statistics on the numbers of individuals detained under immigration powers. This data can be found by accessing the following link.

All decisions to detain or release are taken on the basis of a careful consideration of the facts of each case. Factors arguing in favour of detention include the risk of harm to the public presented by the individual concerned and the risk of absconding. Ultimately, the Home Office detains individuals to facilitate their deportation from the UK.

Immigration Enforcement is responding to the unique circumstances of the coronavirus outbreak and following the latest guidance from Public Health England. We continue to remove people through available commercial routes. Statistics relating to COVID-19 and the immigration system can be viewed by accessing the following link

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887808/statistics-relating-to-covid-19-and-the-immigration-system-may-2020.pdf

The Home Office also publish quarterly statistics on the numbers of individuals detained under immigration powers. This data can be found by accessing the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets>

All decisions to detain or release are taken on the basis of a careful consideration of the facts of each case. Factors arguing in favour of detention include the risk of harm to the public presented by the individual concerned and the risk of absconding. Ultimately, the Home Office detains individuals to facilitate their deportation from the UK.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ **Update: Public Consultation on the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure and the Criminal Procedure Investigations Act 1996 Code of Practice**

The Attorney General (Suella Braverman):

[[HCWS276](#)]

I wish to provide an update on the public consultation on the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure and the CPIA Code of Practice.

Extended Deadline

In February this year, as a result of the hard work undertaken by all involved in the disclosure review, the Lord Chancellor and I launched a public consultation on the revised versions of the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure for investigators, prosecutors and defence practitioners ('the Guidelines') and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 ('CPIA') Code of Practice.

In order to show support to all those facing increasing Covid-19 related pressures, the Lord Chancellor and I decided to extend our consultation. We hope that this new deadline will provide enough time for legal professionals, criminal justice partners and those interested to put forward their views on the changes being made.

As it has not been possible to proactively engage with criminal justice partners as originally anticipated, we wanted to take the opportunity to ask you as Members of Parliament, to encourage those with whom you work who may have an interest in this area to provide feedback to our public consultation. This would help us to engage with key professionals and those with experience in disclosure to ensure that the changes we are proposing are as effective as possible.

The consultation will now close on 22 July 2020 and further details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-on-revisions-to-the-attorney-generals-guidelines-on-disclosure-and-the-cpia-code-of-practice>.

Disclosure

The disclosure of unused material in criminal cases remains a crucial part of ensuring a fair trial takes place and is essential in avoiding miscarriages of justice. Unfortunately, the failure to disclose material promptly has led to the collapse of a number of trials and has impacted the public's confidence in the administration of the criminal justice system.

It is a priority for this Government to continue to encourage improvements in the disclosure process and to achieve permanent change. It is essential that we ensure there are fair trials for all and that we increase confidence in the criminal justice system.

The Proposed Changes

In November 2018, the Government published a [Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Disclosure in the Criminal Justice System](#), which made a set of

recommendations to improve disclosure performance and to address the key challenges of modern disclosure practice. The Review recommended that the Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure required an update in order to truly reflect the challenges of today's disclosure regime.

The Guidelines provide a set of high level principles on the disclosure of unused material in criminal cases, aimed at assisting investigators, prosecutors and defence practitioners in England and Wales apply the disclosure regime contained in the CPIA Code of Practice.

The changes seek to provide a better representation of the challenges faced by the modern day investigator, prosecutor and defence practitioner. The updated Guidelines address the need for culture change, earlier performance of disclosure obligations, the use of technology and balancing the right to privacy with the right to a fair trial.

This consultation is an opportunity to take a crucial step in the disclosure process, both to deal with issues that have been a long-standing concern and to provide practitioners with the tools they need to handle their disclosure obligations effectively.

The Lord Chancellor and I thank all of those who have engaged with us during the process and we are grateful for the role that you have played in recognising the complex challenges that affect the proper performance of the duty of disclosure.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference new date announcement

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):
[[HCWS279](#)]

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the new date that has been announced for COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The COP Bureau of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), with the UK and its Italian partners have agreed new dates for the COP26 UN climate conference, which will now take place between 1 and 12 November 2021 in Glasgow.

The agreement followed consultation with UNFCCC members, delivery partners and other stakeholders. The conference was originally set to take place in November 2020, but had been postponed due to COVID-19.

In the run up to November 2021, the UK government as hosts will continue to work with all involved to increase climate action, build resilience and lower emissions. The new date will also allow the UK and our Italian partners to harness our incoming G7 and G20 presidencies in driving climate ambition.

For more information on this please go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-dates-agreed-for-cop26-united-nations-climate-change-conference>

■ Government to review support in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS277\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention the details of a review into support in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse.

The Government is committed to supporting victims of domestic abuse and is currently taking its Domestic Abuse Bill through Parliament. The Bill and wider package of non-legislative measures underpinning it focus on raising awareness and increasing understanding of domestic abuse, further improving the effectiveness of the justice system in protecting victims of domestic abuse and their children, bringing perpetrators to justice and strengthening the support available for victims by statutory agencies.

Domestic abuse affects every aspect of a victim's life, so it should come as no surprise that domestic abuse also affects a victim's work. It strips people of their independence, can reduce their productivity, and ultimately denies them the opportunity to flourish and develop in their chosen career.

There is already a lot of support which employers can, and do, provide to domestic abuse victims. A number of organisations have developed best practice guidance and model policies to help employers to improve the support available to employees affected by domestic abuse, such as Equality and Human Rights Commission, Business in the Community and the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse.

The review is an opportunity to draw together the various existing strands of activity and consider whether there is more that can be done to support victims of domestic abuse in the workplace. It will start with a call for evidence and will investigate:

- What practical circumstances arise in relation to domestic abuse and work?
- What support can be offered in the workplace for victims of domestic abuse?
- What is possible within the existing statutory framework?
- What does current best practice look like, in the UK and elsewhere?
- What is the potential to do more?

The review will report by the end of the year.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Update on Annual Canvass**

Minister of State (Chloe Smith): [\[HCWS278\]](#)

I wish to update the House on the work that HM Government has been doing to address the risks presented by Covid-19 in relation to the next boundary review due to start in 2021, and to the annual canvass. This follows the introduction of the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill on 19 May, and its Second Reading on 2 June.

Boundary review and electoral data

Under current legislation, the next boundary review will be based on the number of registered electors as at 1 December 2020, following the annual canvass. This is in accordance with the normal, long-established position and that, as a general rule, the revised register that is produced following the annual canvass represents the most up-to-date, robust and transparent information source on which to base a boundary review.

The Government has introduced the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill, which will provide for boundary reviews based on a House of Commons with 650 seats.

As I set out during the Second Reading of the Bill on 2 June, in light of the potential impact of Covid-19 on the operation of ongoing electoral registration activities and the annual canvass, we have already been considering carefully the options for the next boundary review to be based on an alternative set of electoral data.

I am now in a position to update Parliament on the Government's plans, following my commitment to the House to do so during the Second Reading debate.

Having engaged with representatives of the parliamentary parties and electoral stakeholders, the Government has decided to bring forward an amendment to the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill at Committee stage to address this issue. This Government amendment will make provision for the next boundary review to be based, on a one-off basis, on the number of registered electors at 2 March 2020.

It is intended that this data will be supplied by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to the Office for National Statistics (in England and Wales) and National Records of Scotland (in Scotland), and that the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland will produce the data for Northern Ireland. ONS will collate and publish the data for all four constituent nations of the United Kingdom. This approach will provide the most up-to-date electoral registration data available from the point before the impacts of Covid-19 became widespread. It will capture the registrations that took place in the run-up to the 2019 General Election, subject to any monthly updates made to the register between the election and 2 March 2020.

We have engaged with the Parliamentary Parties Panel, other party representatives and electoral stakeholders on this issue in recent months. There is a consensus that, as a consequence of Covid-19, a different approach will be needed this year, and I hope this amendment will deliver that.

Annual canvass 2020

The Government intends shortly to lay before Parliament a draft of the Representation of the People (Electoral Registers Publication Date) Regulations 2020.

Like many sectors, the work of Electoral Services teams have been affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic. This includes staff members having reduced access to office facilities; undertaking greater caring responsibilities whilst working from home; and being shielded or self-isolating, as well as some team members pivoting toward providing essential services within their local communities. At present, however, EROs in England, Scotland and Wales are legally obliged to publish the revised electoral register by 1

December 2020 or they will be liable for prosecution for failure to conduct their statutory duties under the Representation of the People Act 1983.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to provide additional flexibility to EROs in the conduct of this year's annual canvass, this legislation will delay the publication deadline for the final revised 2020 electoral register in Great Britain by two months from 1 December 2020 to 1 February 2021. This is in line with existing legislation which allows the final publication deadline to be delayed by the same period of time should an election be held in an ERO's area within the canvass period of 1 July and 1 December. This change in publication date will have no negative impact on the conduct of the May 2021 elections, indeed it will allow EROs the greatest possible preparation for their safe and effective conduct.

This greater flexibility for the date of publication for the revised registers complements the flexibility already provided by the newly reformed annual canvass, which will allow EROs to conduct safer and more responsive canvasses than ever before. EROs now have greater flexibility to use digital contact methods in place of paper forms, thereby reducing the amount of manual handling, and are able to use telephone contacts where possible in place of door knocking. The Electoral Commission has already issued guidance to EROs on carrying out a Covid-secure canvass and Government officials are monitoring the situation in order to provide further non-legislative support as needed.

In Northern Ireland the canvass is not conducted annually but must be held at least every 10 years. The last canvass was held in Northern Ireland in 2013 and the Coronavirus Act 2020 has postponed the canvass that was due to be held this year to 2021. Under the Northern Ireland system of continuous registration, the Chief Electoral Officer publishes a revised register on 1 December every year (as well as monthly updates) regardless of whether a canvass has been conducted. As boundary reviews are required to be based on electoral data from the same date in all four nations, it is appropriate for the March 2020 data to be used for the next boundary review in Northern Ireland.

In developing our policy we have worked extensively with stakeholders, including the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Scottish Assessors Association, who have all welcomed our proposals. We have also worked closely with the Scottish and Welsh Governments to agree a consistent policy of extending the publication deadline of revised registers across Great Britain, and they intend to bring forward separate, complementary legislation in relation to the local government registers in their respective nations.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Local Authority Procurement Fraud and Corruption Risk Review

Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government (Mr Simon Clarke):
[\[HCWS275\]](#)

Today I have published a review into the risks of fraud and corruption in local government procurement in England, in collaboration with the Government's Anti-Corruption

Champion, the Hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (John Penrose). This report delivers on a commitment by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) in the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022 and is an important part of the wider agenda to strengthen the UK's response to the risks posed by corruption. The findings highlight the importance of continued vigilance across the whole procurement lifecycle and is particularly relevant at this time of heightened activity by councils, as they are working hard to respond to the challenges posed by Covid-19.

Acknowledging and mitigating the risk of fraud and corruption is critical to sound financial management and ensuring that every pound spent by local councils supports the communities they serve. Activities to reduce vulnerability to the risks of fraud and corruption will also have the potential to improve efficiency and identify losses resulting from error, by highlighting weaker areas within systems and processes.

The potential benefits to both councils and the local taxpayer are significant. Under 'business as usual' circumstances councils in England spend around £55 billion a year on goods, works and services[1]. Estimates[2] of the losses to government expenditure caused by fraud and error range between 0.5% and 5%[3] (equating to between £275 million and £2.75 billion per year for local government procurement spend).

It is also important to emphasise that fraud and corruption are by their nature hidden, and a low level of reported cases does not necessarily indicate a lack of fraudulent or corrupt activity. Recent cross government reports demonstrate that detected fraud and corruption is only a proportion of the true scale of the problem[4]. Furthermore, of the 86 councils responding to the survey as part of this review, 23% reported having experienced cases of fraud and corruption within procurement in the 2017-2018 financial year.

Although there is no silver bullet for tackling the issue of fraud and corruption within procurement, this review draws together a range of activities which collectively help identify and mitigate the risks faced by local councils. The report details anonymised examples of good practice already in place across England, providing excellent evidence of local authorities' innovation, commitment and collaborative approach.

The case studies of incidents of fraud and corruption and examples of best practice in prevention, illustrate how risks can materialise and what can be done to mitigate them. In addition, the report includes a risk matrix, which highlights possible measures that councils can use to strengthen their resilience to the risks of fraud and corruption. I hope the report will serve as a valuable resource for councils across the country to learn from. In addition to this report, I would also encourage councils to make best use of the National Fraud Initiative[5], CIPFA Counter Fraud resources[6] and the case studies from the Counter Fraud Fund pilots MHCLG funded in 2014[7], as well as the latest *Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally* Strategy[8].

Taking forward the findings of the Review

This report sets out suggested next steps for the public sector as a whole, for local councils and for MHCLG. Those for the public sector focus on putting in place standard definitions and measurement methodologies, ensuring there is a central place to record reports of fraud and corruption and strengthening whistleblowing arrangements.

MHCLG has a key role in supporting a culture of strong governance and robust accountability within the local government sector, and the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption agenda are important strands within this work.

At the level of individual councils, appropriate capacity is needed to prevent, detect and respond to incidents of fraud and corruption within the procurement lifecycle. This means having in place effective fraud and corruption risk management structures and risk assessments, effective due diligence and management of gifts and hospitality and conflicts of interest.

Capacity and capability within local authority contract management and commercial activities have been identified as areas for improvement and all those involved in procurement must understand their roles and responsibilities, whenever commissioning, procuring or purchasing on behalf of their council. Councils should consider how the risks of fraud and corruption are managed in their wider networks, including local authority companies, Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMOS) and other special purpose vehicles.

Procurement is only one area where fraud and corruption risks are present for councils, and similar risks are present in other areas of council operations. Many of the recommendations in this report should support efforts by councils to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and to hold perpetrators successfully to account.

[1]. National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England 2018, LGA, page 5
https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.122%20-%20National%20Procurement%20Strategy%202018_main%20report_V7.pdf

[2] See page 16,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf.

[3] The Fraud Measurement and Assurance Oversight Board concluded that there is an upper and lower range of likely losses: 0.5% to 5%. See page 31,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf.

[4] Page 15, Cross-Government Fraud Landscape Annual Report 2018,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764832/Cross-GovernmentFraudLandscapeAnnualReport2018.pdf

[5] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative>

[6] <https://www.cipfa.org/services/counter-fraud-centre>

[7] <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/efficiency-and-income-generation/counter-fraud-hub-outcomes-counter-fraud-fund-0>

[8] <https://www.cifas.org.uk/insight/public-affairs-policy/fighting-fraud-corruption-local-authorities>