

**Daily Report****Thursday, 11 June 2020**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 June 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:34 P.M., 11 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

#### ■ Aerospace Industry: Government Assistance

**Mohammad Yasin:** [\[54988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will provide additional financial support to firms that are developing the next generation of low carbon aircraft.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Technology and innovation are important for growing the UK's aerospace sector. Through the Aerospace Growth Partnership, the Government and industry are investing a total of £3.9 billion from 2013 to 2026 in aerospace research and development. Funding is directed by the UK's Aerospace Technology Strategy, which focuses on developing future aircraft while reducing the environmental impacts of aviation and raising the competitiveness of the UK sector.

We are also investing a further £300 million in the Future Flight Challenge, which provides funding to develop future air transport systems that will include electric and autonomous flight.

#### ■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Ethnic Groups

**Layla Moran:** [\[56158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many business owners from BAME backgrounds have received loans under the Bounce Back Loans Scheme.

**Paul Scully:**

As of 7 June, 782,246 loans have been approved under the BBLS, with a total value of £23.78 billion.

Capturing information relating to business ownership by ethnicity is at the discretion of the lender and will also be up to the business owner.

#### ■ Businesses: Government Assistance

**John Spellar:** [\[55854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department's Business Recovery Roundtables will include trades union representation.

**Paul Scully:**

Starting the week commencing 8th June, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will chair the first meetings of new business-led 'recovery roundtables'.

The Department is engaging with a diversity of stakeholders to ensure we elicit the broadest possible range of views on the UK's economic recovery and continues to engage extensively with Trade unions on its response to Covid-19. I continue to hold weekly meetings with the Trade Unions where they are able to feed into the recovery roundtable process and a dedicated meeting to discuss economic recovery is being organised. Stakeholders can also send written contributions by 17<sup>th</sup> of June, a process which is open to everyone including the Trade Unions.

## ■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Construction**

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[56070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with representatives of the construction industry on support for construction companies operating under JCT and NEC forms of contract that face cashflow problems when the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government welcomes the recovery plan produced by the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force, which sets out a plan to ensure the sector can increase activity, work safely, and maximise its contribution to our economic recovery.

We will continue to work with the Task Force, which includes firms, business representative organisations, and representatives of the professional institutions, to support the recovery of the construction sector.

## ■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[56038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to issue guidance to (a) employers and (b) employees on the application of section 44 of the Employment Relations Act (1996) during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

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

In line with employment and health and safety law, this guidance sets out that where employees have health and safety concerns, they should raise this with their employee representative, trade union, or the Health & Safety Executive.

Before restarting work employers should ensure the safety of the workplace by:

- carrying out a risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance

- consulting with their workers or trade unions
- sharing the results of the risk assessment with their workforce and, if possible, publishing on their website

Where HSE identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant PHE guidance to control public health risks they will consider taking a range of enforcement action. The Government recently announced an additional £14 million of funding for HSE to support this work.

## ■ Energy Intensive Industries: Natural Gas

**Alexander Stafford:**

[54291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average effect is per annum from 2020-21 on the 30 largest industrial consumers of gas as a result of the changes to the Gas Transmission Charging Regime which are due to come into effect in October 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is fully committed to minimising industrial energy costs in the UK to ensure our industries remain strong and competitive. We continue to progress a range of measures to deliver an efficient and effective gas system that benefits all consumers.

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties, including their principal objective which is to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers.

Ofgem have considered the impact of the decision on different types of consumers and have set out this analysis in their decision. They expect that consumers overall will benefit from the decision.

Please visit <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/amendments-gas-transmission-charging-regime-decision-and-final-impact-assessment-unc678abcdefg hij> to find out more information on the decision.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[55963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Ofgem's decision to implement gas transmission charging changes with effect from 1 October 2020, if he will make representations to Ofgem on the introduction of a replacement for short haul to keep affected energy intensive industries (a) on Teesside and (b) in the UK on the national gas grid.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

BEIS have been in regular discussion with Ofgem regarding the impact of its decision to implement a new charging regime. BEIS will continue to work closely and engage with Ofgem on all matters, whilst respecting Ofgem's responsibility as an independent regulatory authority.

Ofgem have said that they will consider proposals to introduce a gas short haul charge that seeks to address inefficient bypass of the gas network when they are brought forward by industry.

## ■ Energy: Billing

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[54917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of debts energy companies owe to their customers arising from direct debit payments (a) before and (b) during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Direct debit customers build up credit balances for a variety of reasons: smoothing bills over seasons, changes in consumption patterns, and if suppliers have to estimate the amount of energy used if no meter reading has been provided.

Suppliers have policies on refunding excessive credit balances, and we encourage all consumers to provide frequent meter readings and to monitor payment levels to ensure their payments are appropriate.

BEIS does not collect data on direct debt customer credit balances so has not made an assessment of how these have changed before or during the Covid-19 outbreak. Ofgem can collect data on credit balances by requesting it from suppliers through a formal Request For Information and have done so on occasion in the past, allowing them to monitor this.

## ■ Energy: Meters

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[53991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to include support for smart controls for domestic properties in his forthcoming heat strategy.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings as part of an ambitious programme of work to enable key strategic decisions to set us on a path to decarbonising all homes and buildings.

Smart heating controls/smart thermostats are already a feature of existing heat and energy efficiency policy; for example, they are eligible for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). Some variants, with additional features, have been approved under the 'innovation' element of ECO which means there is a greater incentive to install them.

**■ Fuel Poverty: Linlithgow and East Falkirk****Martyn Day:**[\[54966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households are classified as fuel poor in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Fuel poverty is a devolved matter and BEIS does not make estimates of households in fuel poverty for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

**■ Hydrogen****Alexander Stafford:**[\[54283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of developing a UK-wide hydrogen strategy similar to those being developed in (a) Germany, (b) Australia, (c) Japan and (d) other countries.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases and we have been taking a number of steps to do so. We are:

- exploring options to develop our strategic approach on hydrogen;
- investing in innovation, with up to £121m supporting a range of projects to explore and develop the potential of low carbon hydrogen across the value chain;
- developing new policy and conducting extensive stakeholder engagement, notably around building sustainable business models to support hydrogen production;
- working on the design of the £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund announced in August 2019.

We are also closely following international hydrogen developments and are active participants in international forums, including the Clean Energy Ministerial, the International Partnership for Hydrogen for Fuel Cells in the Economy and Mission Innovation. As part of this we are following developments as countries look to develop and implement domestic hydrogen strategies. We are considering this as part of our wider strategic approach on hydrogen.

**Alexander Stafford:**[\[54284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of (a) the extent of the UK's natural resources and (b) whether those natural resources could be utilised to develop a green hydrogen industry.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases, in line with our 2050 net zero commitment. Low carbon hydrogen can be produced and stored in multiple ways and the UK has significant natural resources

that – if used sustainably – can support development of a low carbon and renewable UK hydrogen supply.

The UK is the world's largest offshore wind market with 9.8GW installed capacity, which will rise to 19.5GW by the mid-2020s. Renewable electricity can be used to produce hydrogen through electrolysis. We are supporting electrolytic hydrogen projects using renewable electricity, as part of up to £121m in innovation support across the low carbon hydrogen value chain. For example, the Dolphyn project is developing a system for clean hydrogen production through electrolysis on floating offshore wind turbines.

Low carbon hydrogen can also be produced through methane reformation with carbon capture, utilisation and storage. The UK has significant underground salt beds which could provide tens of gigawatts of cost effective storage to safely store hydrogen and other gases, and the depleted oil and gas reservoirs deep off our coastline that could potentially store more than 78 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, meaning the UK is ideally placed to develop a thriving low carbon hydrogen industry.

## ■ International Airlines Group

**Mr Virendra Sharma:**

[\[55930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many times he has (a) spoken to or (b) requested to speak to (i) Willie Walsh, chief executive of International Airlines Group and (ii) Alex Cruz, chief executive of British Airways since the start of the 2020.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Department has undertaken extensive engagement with businesses across a range of sectors since the start of 2020, particularly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Department for Transport has historically maintained regular engagement with British Airways and the International Airlines Group as important industry stakeholders.

In recognition of the challenging times that the aviation sector continues to face due to Covid-19, the Government has kept an open dialogue with UK airlines, including British Airways and the International Airlines Group.

## ■ Natural Gas: Fees and Charges

**Alexander Stafford:**

[\[54287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason Ofgem rejected a modification to enable daily metered sites that have reduced gas demands as a result of covid-19 to reduce their capacity charges until 1 October 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory

duties, including their principal objective which is to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers.

When making their decision on UNC725, Ofgem sought to balance the recognition of the Covid-19 circumstances against the principles which underpin the transportation charging arrangements, and gas transporters own financial circumstances. In their assessment, Ofgem considered that the proposed modification did not promote the efficient operation of the network and could have an adverse effect on the gas transporters' ability to discharge their licence obligations.

Please visit <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/unc725-ability-reflect-correct-customer-network-use-and-system-offtake-quantity-soq-during-covid-19> for more information on the decision.

**Alexander Stafford:****[54288]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment Ofgem has made of the risk of inefficient bypass if a replacement for shorthaul is not implemented by October 2020, in light of the effect of covid-19 on the work of the Gas Shippers Panel.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties, including their principal objective which is to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers

Ofgem have said that they will consider proposals to introduce a gas shorthaul charge that seeks to address inefficient bypass of the gas network when they are brought forward by industry.

**Alexander Stafford:****[54289]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether Ofgem made an assessment of the potential risk of inefficient bypass as part of its decision to introduce changes to the Gas Transmission Charging Regime in October 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties, including their principal objective which is to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers.

Ofgem have considered the impact of the decision on different types of consumers and have concluded that consumers overall will benefit from the decision. Ofgem have said that they will consider proposals to introduce a gas shorthaul charge that seeks to address inefficient bypass of the gas network when they are brought forward by industry.

**Alexander Stafford:****[54290]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what annual benefit has Ofgem accredited to the average domestic consumer for 2020-21 as a result of the changes introduced in October 2020 to the Gas Transmission Charging Regime.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties, including their principal objective which is to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers.

Ofgem have considered the impact of the decision on different types of consumers and have set out this analysis in their decision. Ofgem have estimated consumers will save over £3 billion over ten years from this decision, including c£1 billion for gas consumers and c£2 billion for electricity consumers. They expect that consumers overall will benefit from the decision.

Please visit <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/amendments-gas-transmission-charging-regime-decision-and-final-impact-assessment-unc678abcdefgij> to find out more information on the decision.

**Natural Gas: Prices****Alexander Stafford:****[55142]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what percentage of the gas used in the UK each day currently qualifies for short-haul tariffs.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

As the independent energy regulator, Ofgem have responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging. Ofgem have provided a mailbox for all inquiries regarding the Gas Charging Review, including short-haul ([Gas.TransmissionResponse@ofgem.gov.uk](mailto:Gas.TransmissionResponse@ofgem.gov.uk)). I advise that you contact Ofgem directly regarding this matter.

**Public Houses and Restaurants: Coronavirus****Jane Stevenson:****[56168]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing pubs and restaurants to use additional outdoor spaces when re-opening during the covid-19 outbreak to ensure social distancing guidance is adhered to.

**Paul Scully:**

On 13 May, five ministerial-led taskforces were set up to develop plans for how closed sectors could reopen safely. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is responsible for the Pubs and Restaurants Taskforce, which brought together representatives from the industry.

The taskforce consulted with the sector to develop guidance that will allow restaurants, bars and cafes to reopen at the earliest point it is considered safe to do so. The guidance, which will cover both indoor and outdoor workspaces, will be published in due course.

As is the case now, individual business owners will be responsible for ensuring their customers adhere to social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

## ■ Small Businesses: Government Assistance

**Chi Onwurah:**

[55964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 51958, on Bounce Back Loan Scheme, how businesses using the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) that later decide that they need more financing can refinance under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) when as stated businesses are not permitted to access more than one of either the BBLS, CBILS, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme or the Covid Corporate Financing Facility scheme at the same time.

**Paul Scully:**

Under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS), a business which has had their application for a loan accepted, or is part of a wider group (defined by having a holding company at the top of their structure) in which any business has had their application for a loan accepted, is not able to apply for a further loan.

Businesses using the BBLS, who later decide that they need more financing, may be able to refinance their loan in full under Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) provided they are eligible for the CBILS.

Businesses are not permitted to access more than one of either the BBLS, CBILS, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) or the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) scheme at the same time.

## CABINET OFFICE

### ■ Dental Services

**Judith Cummins:**

[56208]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will include dentists and dental workers as key workers on the gov.uk website.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Guidance on the provision of education for the children of certain critical workers can be found here:

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

This guidance has been updated to reflect the decision to move forward with the wider opening of education and childcare settings. It is already the case that dentists and dental workers would be eligible for the support if the role they are undertaking is required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector.

## ■ Office for Tackling Injustices

**Dawn Butler:**

[[55892](#)]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Office for Tackling Injustices is planned to be established.

**Dawn Butler:**

[[55893](#)]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the remit will be of the Office for Tackling Injustices.

**Dawn Butler:**

[[55894](#)]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what budget has been allocated to the Office for Tackling Injustices.

**Chloe Smith:**

Further to the answer given to PQ [1870](#) on 7 April 2020, announcements will be made in the usual way.

## DEFENCE

## ■ Sentinel Aircraft

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[[56143](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what financial effect the covid-19 outbreak has had on his Department's decision to cease Raytheon Sentinel.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[[56147](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision to cease the service of Raytheon Sentinel on the UK economy.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**

[[56149](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay to the integrated security review on the transparency of decision-making to cease Raytheon Sentinel.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Covid-19 outbreak has had no bearing on Sentinel.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 determined that Sentinel should have an out of service date (OSD) of March 2021.

Sentinel's radar and mission system are now increasingly obsolescent and will face increasing reliability issues as time progresses. Retaining the capability would have

required significant upgrade expenditure and the March 2021 out of service date has been retained. It is necessary to retire certain capabilities at planned OSDs to allow re-investment in future capability.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[56144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the cessation of Raytheon Sentinel on (a) surveillance support for the UK's armed forces, (b) national security and (c) UK operational advantage.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[56145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to fill the surveillance support gap left by the cessation of Raytheon Sentinel.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[56148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the cessation of Raytheon Sentinel on the safety of UK armed forces while on operations.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 set Sentinel's out of service date of March 2021. Sentinel will continue to deliver operational capability and the ability to deploy on operational tasking into the first quarter of 2021.

While no identical capability is operated by the UK (though similar capabilities exist in the NATO inventory), the UK does have a number of other intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities that collect different types of intelligence information, including long-range strategic assets (Sentry, Rivet Joint and Poseidon) and shorter-range more tactically-focused assets (including Shadow, Reaper and Watchkeeper).

The safety and security of our Armed Forces remains paramount. This is achieved through robust Force Protection, coupled with advanced surveillance, intelligence analysis and situational awareness processes to maintain operational advantage.

**Mr Stephen Morgan:**[\[56146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be affected by the decision to cease the Raytheon Sentinel service.

**Jeremy Quin:**

There will be no redundancies for RAF personnel. All personnel will be posted elsewhere within the RAF and wider Ministry of Defence. There will be a range of future opportunities including in ISTAR where assets include Poseidon which met its initial operating capability in April 2020.

We continue to liaise closely with our contractors as their contracts reach their long-standing contract termination points to support operational capability until out of service date and to deactivate Sentinel as efficiently as possible.

**■ Veterans UK: Telephone Services****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[55902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 51724 on the Veterans UK Helpline, when the telephone service of the Veterans UK Helpline will be in full service.

**Johnny Mercer:**

COVID -19 workplace guidelines currently restrict the number of staff who are able to attend the workplace safely. The reduced capacity is however dealing with the level of calls being received and the email process continues to be an option for customers wanting contact Veterans UK. The email only service adequately coped with the demand from customers and all requests for help have been responded to.

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[55903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 51724 on the Veterans UK Helpline, how many calls to that telephone service were recorded in each month of 2020.

**Johnny Mercer:**

From 1 January 2020 to 8 June 2020, I can confirm the following number of telephone calls were recorded by the Veterans UK Helpline:

MONTH	CALLS RECORDED BY THE VETERANS UK HELPLINE
January 2020	9,733
February 2020	9,114
March 2020 (up to 22 March)	7,595

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, on 23 March 2020 the Veterans UK helpline was adapted to an email-only service. A partial telephony service resumed on 3 June 2020 and has recorded 459 calls up to 8 June 2020.

The Veterans UK helpline operators have responded to all 9,000 enquiries received by email since the email-only service was introduced on 23 March. This service remains in place alongside the reduced telephony service. All demand for help and assistance is being met.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Charities: Coronavirus****Sir George Howarth:****[48950]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government has plans to introduce a stabilisation fund for the charity sector in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

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

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

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

This is a package of emergency response funding targeted at supporting charities and social enterprises on the frontline of responding to Coronavirus, or providing other essential services. It builds on the significant package of support available across sectors, including the Job Retention Scheme.

**■ Charities: Ethnic Groups****Dawn Butler:****[54027]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of support for BAME charities that are helping people disproportionately affected by covid-19.

**Dawn Butler:****[54028]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that BAME charities are receiving support through the charity relief package announced in April 2020.

**Dawn Butler:****[54029]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to protect BAME charities from closure during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Dawn Butler:**[\[54030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will ring-fence part of the charity relief package, announced in April 2020, for BAME charities.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

My department is committed to ongoing, regular and in depth engagement with the charity and social enterprise sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. DCMS will continue to work closely to assess how we can support BAME charities and social enterprises in doing their important work. The Minister for Civil Society holds a fortnightly roundtable to hear directly from BAME civil society organisations to highlight concerns and responses to covid-19.

The Government's £750m targeted funding package and a further £150 million from dormant bank accounts will help charities, social enterprises and vulnerable individuals. We are proactively engaging across government and directly with the sector to maintain a complete picture of the impact and to better understand unmet needs at a national and local level that are not already addressed by existing plans.

My department and the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF - our distribution partners for the Coronavirus Community Support Fund) have been - and continue to - engage extensively with BAME organisations during the development of the response and are working with a number of organisations to improve the reach of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. A diverse advisory panel has been set up to support the distribution process for the fund.

## ■ Charities: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[52177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his announcement of £150 million charity funding in the covid-19 press conference on 20 May 2020, how much of that funding is new money; and from which sources that money is derived.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

£71 million of the £150 million of funding announced on 20 May 2020 is new money. Government has worked with the dormant assets organisations to repurpose £79 million of their allocations in response to the crisis. Combined, the £150 million will support urgent work in England to tackle youth unemployment; expand access to emergency loans for civil society organisations; and help improve the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

This funding comes from the dormant assets scheme. The scheme enables banks and building societies to voluntarily transfer funds from dormant accounts. Dormant accounts are those that have not been touched for at least 15 years and where the bank or building society is unable to get in touch with the customer to reunite them with their money. Customers can reclaim their money at any time. Since its inception in 2011, over £745 million has been released to social or environmental causes through the scheme.

**■ Charities: Shops****Dame Diana Johnson:****[51729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance can the Government plans to provide to charities, to allow them to operate their charity shops safely during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government is working with the charity sector to support it as it begins to recommence activities in line with government guidance on COVID-19 and social distancing. Alongside other non-essential retail, charity shops are planning to start reopening from 15th June. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published guidance on the reopening of non-essential retail which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>. In addition to this, the Charity Retail Association has produced guidance to specifically support the reopening of charity shops which can be found here: <https://www.charityretail.org.uk/we-have-published-our-reopening-pack/>.

**■ Conservation: Greater London****Stephen Hammond:****[55924]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Charity Commission plans to publish the report on its inquiry into Wimbledon And Putney Commons Conservators.

**Stephen Hammond:****[55925]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the reasons are for the delay in publication of the Charity Commission's report on its inquiry into Wimbledon And Putney Commons Conservators.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

As the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, the Charity Commission always aims to conclude investigations as soon as is practicable, but the length of an inquiry can depend on many factors including the nature and complexity of the issues and any involvement with or representations from third parties.

The Charity Commission's planned publication of its concluding report on its inquiry into Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators was delayed earlier this year as a result of a potential legal challenge. The Charity Commission is currently considering a large number of complex representations made in relation to the report. The report will be published on [GOV.UK](#) and shared with interested third parties as soon as possible once these representations have been fully considered.

**■ Gambling: Coronavirus****John Spellar:**[\[55860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to his oral Answer of 4 June 2020, Official Report, column 992 on Covid-19: Sporting Sector, what the timetable is for the re-opening of the betting and gaming industry as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

This week the Prime Minister will outline next steps for a number of sectors, which are expected to take effect from 15 June, subject to the latest scientific and medical advice. Further announcements about remaining sectors of the economy will follow in due course.

**■ Gyms: Coronavirus****Alexander Stafford:**[\[49877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to allow health clubs to reopen during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alexander Stafford:**[\[49878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to allow gyms to reopen during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Gyms and health club facilities play a crucial role in supporting people to be active and the Government is committed to reopening sports and physical activity facilities as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are holding regular discussions with representatives from the leisure sector and national sports organisations to develop guidance that will support them to open their facilities in a timely and safe manner once lockdown measures are eased.

As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, we will be guided by the science to ensure that as restrictions are eased people can return to activity safely.

**■ Internet: Safety****John Nicolson:**[\[52103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to protect people with epilepsy from being targeted by social media posts designed to trigger a seizure with flashing images; and if he will bring forward amendments to the Online Harms Bill to criminalise that matter.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The government intends to introduce world-leading Online Harms legislation to make the UK the safest place to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users which will be overseen by an independent

regulator. The Government published its Initial Consultation Response to the Online Harms White Paper in February 2020, and this set out our direction of travel on a number of key areas. We are aiming to publish a full government response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation later this year, and this will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation.

In addition to this new legislation, it is important to make sure that the criminal law is fit for purpose to deal with online harms. DCMS and the Ministry of Justice have engaged the Law Commission on a second phase of their review of abusive and offensive online communications. The Law Commission will review existing communications offences and make specific recommendations about options for reform, to ensure that criminal law provides consistent and effective protection against such behaviour.

## ■ Local Press

**Sir John Hayes:**

[53304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure a sustainable future for local newspapers.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

This government is clear that local newspapers are vital to a healthy democracy, They are uniquely placed to undertake investigative journalism and scrutiny of public institutions, including local councils and courts.

As the independent Cairncross Review into the future of journalism identified, society is increasingly moving online and news publishers are facing significant challenges in transitioning to sustainable digital business models. The government supports the majority of the nine recommendations the Cairncross Review made for government, regulators and industry to help future-proof the sector, and is already taking some forward. We have worked with Nesta to develop a £2million pilot innovation fund, launched in October 2019, which seeks to invest in new technological prototypes, start-ups and innovative business models to explore new ways of sustaining the industry. The government will consider options for the full fund ahead of the next Spending Review.

Covid-19 has exacerbated and accelerated the already challenging financial situation for local papers. The government recognises their vital role in ensuring the provision of reliable, high-quality information throughout the current pandemic, and has therefore clarified that journalists and other ancillary staff are 'key workers' for the purposes of access to childcare and educational places. We have also issued guidance to local authorities on the importance of newspaper delivery, to support the continued dissemination of printed public interest news. Additionally, the government has sought to maximise publishers' advertising opportunities through a public information campaign. The current partnership brings together over 600 titles across the UK, with the vast majority of titles being local papers.

Local publishers are also able to benefit from several measures included in our unprecedented business support package, such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Job Retention Scheme, Bounce Back Loans, VAT deferrals, and coverage of statutory sick pay costs.

The government will continue to consider all possible options in the interests of promoting and sustaining high-quality news journalism. We are committed to getting this work right, so future generations can be inspired and engaged by a free and vibrant press.

## ■ National Citizens Service Trust

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[55652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been allocated to NCS in each year since its inception; how much funding was budgeted for in 2020; and if he will also publish that figure as spend per participant.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The table below shows the funding provided by Government to the National Citizen Service since the programme started in 2011. Please note that the NCS programme was sponsored by the Cabinet Office from inception until 2016/17.

YEAR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total grant funding (£M)	21	62	84	117	155	181	186	189	176

As per the Main Estimates the total funding envelope for NCS Trust in 2020/21 (including depreciation) is £177.8m. A delegated budget to the NCS Trust will be agreed following a review of funding requirements for the 2020 Summer programme.

The spend per participant was £1,764 for financial year 2018/19, as noted in the 2018/19 NCS Annual Report. The 2019/2020 NCS Annual Report will include a best estimate unit cost and will be published in Q4 2020. The 2020/2021 Annual Report will be published after the end of the financial year.

## ■ National Citizens Service Trust: Coronavirus

**Tim Loughton:**

[\[55651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what adjustment his Department has made to the grant allocated to NCS Trust as a result of the cancellation of summer programmes this year following the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Department is working closely with the NCS Trust, the Government Arms' Length Body commissioned to deliver the programme, to develop an alternative offer for this summer. The details of the alternative summer programme, and its financial implications, are being developed at pace between DCMS, the NCS Trust and their supplier network.

**Newspaper Press****Caroline Lucas:**[\[53369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many meetings (a) he and (b) his officials have had with representatives from (i) the News Media Association, (ii) the Independent Community News Network and (iii) the Public Interest News Foundation since 23 March 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

Ministers at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have held a number of roundtables and bilateral meetings with representatives from across the Press sector, including the News Media Association (NMA), the Independent Community News Network (ICNN) and the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis.

Officials at the DCMS have also been in regular contact with representatives from all three organisations, as well as with stakeholders from the wider sector, as part of the government's increased engagement to best understand the impacts of Covid-19 on the sector, and ensure interventions are as effective as possible.

The Minister for Media and Data met with the Independent Community News Network and the Public Interest News Foundation on 6 May to discuss government support to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 for the independent news publishing sector in particular. This meeting included a discussion about the Government's national campaign to provide information and reassurance to the public about Covid-19 and how the independent sector may be used to reach underserved audiences.

Since the week commencing 23 March, the Minister for Media and Data has also held fortnightly roundtable meetings with representatives from across the sector, including the NMA and the ICNN.

**Sports: Worcestershire****Sajid Javid:**[\[53393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support sports clubs in Worcestershire.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

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

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

## ■ Voluntary Organisations: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[49058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on allocating funding from the public purse to ensure the financial sustainability of (a) voluntary and (b) community organisations.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

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

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

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

This is a package of emergency response funding targeted at supporting voluntary and community sector organisations on the frontline of responding to Coronavirus, or providing other essential services. It builds on the significant package of support available across sectors, including the Job Retention Scheme.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Education: Coronavirus

**Grahame Morris:**

[55944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to enable parents to request that their child resists the current school year in the event that educational progress has been significantly affected by the covid-19 outbreak and subsequent school closure.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

We do not currently anticipate that children and young people will need to repeat a school year as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to look at all options to make sure children and young people get the support they need to continue their education and make up for time spent out of school. However, it remains possible for headteachers to agree this in individual cases, if they think it is appropriate.

**Educational Visits: Coronavirus****Steve Brine:****[55956]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent guidance his Department has issued to schools on overseas trips during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department for Education's 'Actions for Schools during the coronavirus outbreak guidance' – which includes advice to schools regarding educational visits and school trips, both overseas and domestic - was last updated on 3 June. The guidance can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>.

The guidance states that the Government advises against any overseas or domestic visits for children under 18 organised by schools and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advises against all non-essential international travel. The Department for Transport's advice to avoid public transport and unnecessary journeys and Public Health England (PHE) social distancing measures remain in place. Schools affected by these restrictions should work with their tour operator and/or insurance company. The Department will continue to review this position based on FCO and PHE advice.

Further information is available in the guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): travel advice for educational settings', which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-advice-for-educational-settings>.

**Free School Meals****Tulip Siddiq:****[56086]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of children who (a) are eligible for free school meals and (b) have become eligible for free school meals in each nation of the UK since March 2020.

**Vicky Ford:**

The number of children who are (a) eligible for free school meals, is published in the 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics' publication. The latest data shows that in

England in January 2019, for all school types, 15.4% of pupils were eligible for and claiming free school meals. Data from January 2020 is scheduled for publication on 25th June 2020. The latest publication is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2019>.

Note that this publication only covers England as education is devolved across the UK.

The number of children who (b) have become eligible for free school meals in each nation of the UK since March 2020 is not available.

## ■ Home Education: Coronavirus

**Sir David Evennett:**

[54859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many laptops have been provided to disadvantaged children for homeworking during the covid-19 outbreak in (a) London, (b) Bexley Borough and (c) the Bexleyheath and Crayford constituency.

**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. Local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify and distribute the laptops and tablets to children and young people who need devices. 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 as planned.

## ■ Pupils: Bereavement Counselling

**Afzal Khan:**

[53601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what mental health support his Department is providing to pupils returning to school on 1 June 2020 who have experienced a bereavement as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government remains committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people. Access to mental health support including bereavement support is more important than ever during 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.

All NHS Mental Health Trusts have been asked to ensure there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. Public Health England and Health

Education England have also developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, including bereavement support, 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, which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>. BBC Bitesize has also worked with the department to provide content with substantial focus on mental health, wellbeing and pastoral care.

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 begin to open in June 2020. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>.

Children and young people can access free confidential support anytime from government-backed voluntary and community sector organisations either by texting SHOUT to 85258, or by calling Childline on 0800 1111 or The Mix on 0808 808 4994. Children and young people can also find online information on COVID-19 and mental health on the Young Minds website, which is available here:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>.

For bereavement support children and young people can find online support from Bereavement UK, which provides information and resources to support bereaved pupils, schools and staff, and their website is available here:  
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>.

Alternatively, children and young people can access support from the Childhood Bereavement Network website, which is available here:

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>.

## ■ School Meals

**Alex Norris:**

[56119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that schools put in place plans to recommence serving students lunches provided by their school food suppliers.

**Alex Norris:**

[56120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that schools do not use Edenred and other suppliers' vouchers when their usual school meal provider is able to provide meals to children in receipt of free school meals.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government is continuing to provide schools with their expected funding, including funding to cover benefits-related free school meals and universal infant free school meals, throughout this period. We are asking schools to support children at home who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals, by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children, and we encourage this approach.

As schools prepare to open more widely, they should speak to their school catering team or provider about the best arrangements for school meals. Schools should ensure that catering teams and food suppliers are supported to return to school to provide meals both for those children attending school and for those remaining at home who are eligible for free school meals. If a school catering service cannot provide meals or food parcels for children who are at home, the school can continue to offer vouchers to families of eligible pupils if needed.

Our guidance on free school meals during this period is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

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

**Schools: Coronavirus****Alex Sobel:****[55013]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support schools in helping (a) pupils in (i) reception and (ii) year 1 and (b) other younger pupils to socially distance when their school reopens during the covid-19 outbreak

**Nick Gibb:**

On 28 May, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirmed that the Government's five tests were met and we could move forward with easing the lockdown measures which have been in place across England. Based on all the evidence, we have been able to begin our cautious and phased approach to asking schools and nurseries to open for more children. This means that from 1 June, primary schools have begun to welcome back children in nursery, Reception, year 1 and year 6, alongside the priority groups they have been caring for since the end of March.

We know that, unlike older children and adults, early years and primary age children cannot be expected to remain 2 metres apart from each other and staff. In deciding to bring more children back to school we are taking this into account and asking schools to implement a hierarchy of controls to reduce any risk of transmission. These include minimising contact and mixing by keeping children in small consistent groups. Full guidance on implementing protective measures is available at:

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

**Tom Hunt:****[55044]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on reopening schools in that country during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Nick Gibb:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education has not had discussions with his Israeli counterpart on reopening schools in that country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important during this pandemic that we engage internationally and learn from each other on shared challenges in education. Official-level discussions are continuing to take place with counterparts in other countries on all aspects of the education response to the pandemic. However, each country will make their own decisions based on a range of local information, including infection rates and the structure of their education system.

**Schools: Fires****Christian Wakeford:****[54294]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average cost to the public purse has been of the relocation of and travel for pupils following school fires in each financial year since 2015-16.

**Christian Wakeford:****[54295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of a school building fire on the attainment of pupils at the school.

**Christian Wakeford:****[54296]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department makes assessments of the effect of school fires on levels of educational attainment.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department does not collect information on the average cost of the relocation of and travel for pupils following school fires, although additional transport and travel costs would typically be covered through the business interruption element of a school's insurance cover.

The Department has not made an assessment of the effect of a fire on the attainment of pupils at the school and does not make assessments of the effect of fires on levels of educational attainment.

The Department attaches the highest priority to the safety of pupils and staff, and to ensuring that the owners of school buildings take the necessary action to protect those buildings. Schools must comply with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order

2005, which means they must have an up to date fire risk assessment, a fire alarm and regular fire drills.

Schools are fundamentally safe environments and the relevant data is published by the Home Office. This data shows, among other things, that in the five years up to 2018-19, there are approximately six fires per year that spread to a whole building, in a school estate of around 60,000 buildings (0.01% of buildings). The data can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables#incident-level-datasets>.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Tim Loughton:**

[55840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of children with Education Health Care Plans (a) were attending primary school in the latest period for which data is available before reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes were reopened and (b) are attending primary school presently.

**Tim Loughton:**

[55841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of children with Education, Health and Care plans who have a parent designated as a key worker.

**Vicky Ford:**

The latest data on the attendance of children with an education, health and care (EHC) plan in educational establishments since 23 March was published on Tuesday 9 June and covers data up to Thursday 4 June. The data is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings>.

The data is collected from individual education establishments and the published figures include estimates for non-response.

An estimate of the number of children with EHC plans who have a parent designated as a critical worker has not been made.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

[54916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has provided to SEND schools on transportation for pupils during the covid-19 outbreak that complies with social distancing guidelines; and what additional support is available to those pupils.

**Nick Gibb:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible pupils. The aim of the duty is to ensure that no child is prevented from attending school because they cannot walk there, whether that is because of distance, the safety of the route, or their special educational needs or disability.

Given the variety of vehicles used to deliver school transport, decisions about appropriate protective measures should be taken locally by local authorities and their transport operators following a risk assessment.

The Department for Transport has published safer transport guidance for transport operators, available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators).

They have also published guidance for the public on safer travel during the COVID-19 outbreak to which parents may wish to refer:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers).

The Department for Education's guidance on implementing protective measures in schools and nurseries includes advice on transport arrangements:

<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#when-open>.

We have also published guidance on supporting children and young people with special education needs and disability (SEND) as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance).

## ■ Students: Disability

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[51580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that tendering processes run by the Student Loans Company are delivered within the advertised time scale.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is one of the department's main arm's length bodies.

The department continues to offer commercial support and advice to the SLC to help ensure that tendering processes run by the SLC are delivered within the advertised time scale.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Flood Control

**Mr Laurence Robertson:**

[55847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of (a) river dredging and (b) de-silting of minor waterways on reducing the incidence of flooding; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency (EA) refers to dredging as the removal of accumulated material in a river. It is often done to maintain channel conveyance and ensure water can flow freely. Dredging also includes 'de-silting' which removes material like gravel or soil washed into rivers, as well as rocks and plant life.

To protect people and properties from flooding the EA prioritises activities that achieve the greatest benefit. Dredging and clearing channels are important parts of the EA's maintenance regime when they improve the channel's ability to carry increased river flows and manage flood risk. Over each of the past three years the EA has spent between £45 million and £55 million per year on channel maintenance, and between £5 million and £11 million of that is spent on dredging.

In 2010, the EA carried out a comprehensive series of trials to review and update the understanding of the benefits and effectiveness of dredging. It showed dredging can reduce flood risk, but its effectiveness and value-for-money varies significantly depending on location. Historic records and modelling also show that dredging in some locations can increase erosion and flood risk for communities downstream.

Since then, further studies such as the Thames bathymetry review have validated the results of the 2010 trials. In many cases, rivers naturally and quickly return to their pre-dredged state. Therefore any flood risk benefits are so short lived that the work cannot be economically justified.

The Somerset Rivers Authority and internal drainage boards (IDBs) have trialled alternative methods for dredging. These included both cutter suction and water injection dredging, and a full-scale 5 km trial using water injection dredging on the River Parrett. The trials demonstrated some potential to reduce costs of dredging in tidal rivers. The Environment Agency uses the results of such trials and studies to decide where and how dredging will be effective, on a case-by-case basis.

**Livestock: Exports****Theresa Villiers:**[\[55899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on restricting the export of live animals for slaughter.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We have a manifesto commitment to end excessively long journeys for live animals going for slaughter and fattening, which is an opportunity we have gained through leaving the EU. We intend to issue a consultation on how we deliver on that commitment in due course.

**Nephrops: Coronavirus****Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[56023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the UK scampi market is planned to re-open as part of the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Up to April this year, retail sales of scampi are, year on year, up in 2020. Noticeably higher sales in March may reflect consumers buying frozen products to prepare for Covid-19-related movement restrictions. Reduced demand from the UK food service sector and export markets has had a notable impact on the Nephrops market. Whilst there are some small signs of recovery as EU Nephrops markets reopen, prices remain subdued. Defra continues to work with the seafood industry across the UK, and with the Devolved Administrations and Seafish, to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on trade, and to support the sector through these challenging times.

That support includes providing £10 million of funding to the sector in England through the Fisheries Response Fund and the Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme. The Fisheries Response Fund, worth £9 million, has provided grants of up to £10,000 for eligible catching and aquaculture businesses to help cover fixed-costs. The £1 million Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme is supporting projects to help develop the infrastructure necessary to get fish from the catching & processing sectors to consumers, creating new opportunities and improving market resilience.

**■ Plastics: Marine Environment****Jamie Stone:****[56109]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department has collected on the (a) quantity, (b) type and (c) harmful effects of plastic pollution in the UK's marine environments.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The UK collects data on the quantity and type of marine litter in our waters including on seafloor litter, floating litter and beach litter, following methodologies agreed through the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) Convention's monitoring and assessment programmes. Data is available through the Marine Online Assessment Tool: <https://moat.cefas.co.uk/>

We fund and conduct research to improve our understanding of the impacts of plastic pollution in the marine environment. This includes an evidence review published in February 2020 which covers the impacts of marine plastic pollution, including microplastics, on marine life. This can be accessed at:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=20339&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=ME5436&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>

**■ Wildlife Parks: Coronavirus****Sir Roger Gale:****[55837]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to facilitate the re-opening of wildlife parks; and if he will make a statement.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As announced by the Prime Minister on 10 June, outdoor areas of zoos and safari parks will be allowed to reopen from 15 June, subject to appropriate social distancing measures being in place. This includes keeping indoor exhibitions, such as reptile houses and those in aquariums, closed, and ensuring other amenities like cafes offer take-away services only.

The move follows close work by the Government with the zoo industry to ensure visitor numbers can be managed and safeguards are put in place.

The decision to relax restrictions on these select outdoor attractions is part of the Government's careful approach to easing the lockdown in phases, guided by the advice of scientific and medical experts and the fact the risk of transmission is much lower outdoors.

Officials continue to meet weekly with BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) and with the CEOs of the largest charitable zoos and aquariums in England providing a valuable forum to monitor concerns and seek insights from key sector representatives on current issues.

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE****■ Benin: Elections****Mark Pritchard:**[\[51775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the equity of process of recent elections in Benin.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK Government notes the outcome of local elections in Benin on 17 May. Participation was low and only one opposition party took part, despite the provisional ruling of the African Court of Human and People's Rights that the Government of Benin should take steps to avoid the exclusion of opposition parties. These concerns stand in contrast to the fact that Benin was one of the first nations in West Africa to deliver free and fair elections, in the 1990s. Elections are the responsibility of the Government of Benin, all political parties and the Beninese people. The UK remains committed to peaceful, free and credible elections, in line with international law, the importance of maintaining political space and an inclusive democratic process.

**■ British Overseas Territories: Biodiversity****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[54033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect and enhance biodiversity in the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories.

**Wendy Morton:**

Environmental policy is a devolved responsibility, however there are a number of funding streams available to the British Overseas Territories to support the protection

and management of their natural resources. The Government has awarded £5.2 million which will be given to 21 projects through the Darwin Plus Scheme for conservation of the unique and globally significant plants and animals that reside in UK Overseas Territories.

Darwin Plus (also known as The Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund) is an environmental funding stream with an annual budget of £10 million from 2021. Funding from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund has also provided funding from 2016-2021 for a number of environmental projects including the Blue Belt of marine protection around the OTs, assessing Natural Capital, implementing actions plans to protect fragile coral reefs and non-native species/biosecurity measures to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful species to new environments.

## ■ China: Organs

**Sammy Wilson:**

[\[54880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his counterpart in the Chinese Government on the findings of the investigation into organ harvesting carried out by the China Tribunal chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice.

**Nigel Adams:**

We have noted the findings of the recent China Tribunal report. The testimonies added to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in China. The Government's position remains that, if true, the practice of systematic, state-sponsored organ harvesting would constitute a serious violation of human rights.

We regularly raise our human rights concerns with China, including on the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities. The Foreign Secretary did so most recently on 9 March with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[53583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to secure a refund for the 400,000 units of defective personal protective equipment imported from Turkey.

**James Duddridge:**

We have procured and received donations of hundreds of thousands of gowns and coveralls from Turkey. A small number of an order of gowns with a private company did not meet specifications, but we are finding a use for them elsewhere. Most of this order of gowns passed inspections, making them suitable for the NHS. The Turkish Authorities also stepped in to provide 68,000 coveralls when it became clear that an order from a private company was delayed. All have passed the checks for

distribution to the front line. We are grateful to our Turkish partners for their support in this matter.

## ■ Cyprus

### **Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[54004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Republic of Cyprus counterpart on the reopening of the crossings between Northern Cyprus and the Republic.

### **Wendy Morton:**

On 14 May the Foreign Secretary raised the reopening of the crossing points with his Republic of Cyprus counterpart. Our High Commissioner in Nicosia and his staff have also been in contact with officials across the island on the issue of the crossing points, encouraging crossings to re-open.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, unilateral action was taken by both sides over the crossing points, which effectively temporarily ended the free movement of Cypriots across the island. This pandemic has highlighted the importance of cooperation between the two communities, in particular, through the bi-communal technical committees. We welcomed the agreement between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders that Turkish Cypriot students, Turkish Cypriot workers and Maronites would be able to cross the Green Line from 8 June. We urge both sides to take the appropriate action at the checkpoints to enable Cypriots to be able to travel across their own island unrestricted, as they could before the COVID-19 crisis. This is vital for bi-communal interaction in support of a settlement.

## ■ Cyprus: Politics and Government

### **Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[54005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he supports the reopening of Crans-Montana talks after the postponed Turkish Cypriot elections.

### **Wendy Morton:**

Although the talks in Crans Montana ended without agreement, important progress towards addressing outstanding issues was made. We will continue to support the UN and other parties in their work towards a settlement. The UK is open to whatever arrangements the two sides and the other Guarantor Powers can agree on in order to meet the security needs of a reunited Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot leader election will now take place in October 2020. It will be important that further talks progress following that election.

### **Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[54006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what role the UK Government has played in the reunification negotiations as the UN penholder on the Cyprus peace process.

**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[54007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's policy is on support for the work of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' Personal Envoy, Jane Holl Lute, in continuing contact with the two Cypriot communities, Greece, Turkey and the UK on a peace process for the island of Cyprus.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is a strong supporter of a comprehensive and just Cyprus settlement based on the internationally accepted model of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. We regularly engage with the parties to the settlement talks at all levels. We continue to encourage all parties to engage constructively in talks about a settlement and demonstrate they are committed to making progress. We endorse the UN Secretary-General's view that prospects for a settlement remain alive. We welcome his continued willingness to work with the parties, such as his meeting of 25 November 2019 with the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders, and the engagement of UN Secretary General's Representative on the Cyprus Dispute, Ms Jane Holl Lute, and hope this will lead to a return to comprehensive negotiations. As penholder on the UN Security Council we fully support the renewal of mandate for the UN's peacekeeping force on Cyprus.

The UK continues to contribute to a settlement through practical assistance to help the two sides move towards a settlement. We are one of the largest troop contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Force on the island, UNFICYP. It is for the sides to agree on the details of any final settlement deal which will require the agreement of the two leaders, the support of Greece and Turkey and - importantly - successful referenda in each community.

**George Floyd****Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[55834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what response he has received to the representations he has made to the Government of the USA following the death of George Floyd.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have been clear that the death of George Floyd was appalling, inexcusable and deeply distressing. We are aware that four suspects have been charged and there is a federal review underway. We would hope and expect justice to be done.

**Guyana: Election Observers****Barry Gardiner:**[\[55844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Guyanese counterpart on that Government's decision not to allow two accredited international observers from the Carter Centre to return to

Guyana to observe the ongoing election recount and the remainder of Guyana's electoral process.

**Wendy Morton:**

As the Foreign Secretary said in his statement of 24 March, a transition of government in Guyana should only take place in line with transparent and democratic principles that lead to credible results. We continue to call upon President Granger to ensure that proper procedures are followed before embarking upon a transition of government. Our High Commissioner, on the Foreign Secretary's behalf, has worked with US, Canadian and EU counterparts to make clear our concerns and disappointment at the refusal to allow the Carter Center and IRI into the country. The UK will continue to call for all to adhere to the democratic principles Guyana has signed up to as a member of the Commonwealth, to ensure the voice and will of the people of Guyana are heard.

■ **Iran: UN Resolutions**

**John Lamont:**

[\[54996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 June 2020 to Question 49098 on Iran: Arms Trade, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UN Security Council Resolutions 2231, 1540, 2216 and 1701 in tackling Iran's regional threat.

**James Cleverly:**

We have long been clear about our concerns over Iran's continued destabilising activity throughout the region. As part of this, we have significant and longstanding concerns, alongside our international partners, over Iran's ballistic missile programme, which poses a further threat to regional security. Reports that Iran has carried out a satellite launch - using ballistic missile technology - are of significant concern and inconsistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which calls on Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon. Iran must abide by this.

We remain concerned about the activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the revelation it has developed an independent military space launch capability, and call on Iran urgently to cease all forms of destabilising activity. We regularly examine options and activity to address these issues and call on Iran to fully comply with UNSCRs 2231, 1540, 2216 and 1701.

■ **Israeli Settlements**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[55876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Israel on its proposed annexation of the West Bank.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary reiterated our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during a call with Alternate Israeli Prime Minister Gantz on 20 May and Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 2 June. 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 toward annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to renewed efforts to restart peace negotiations, and contrary to international law.

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[55877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on taking economic steps in response to the Government of Israel's proposed annexation of the West Bank.

**James Cleverly:**

We continue to work closely with international partners to advocate a two-state solution and encourage a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties. I reiterated, at the virtual meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee with Israel, the Palestinians, the EU, and the wider international community on 2 June, our concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. 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.

**■ Israeli Settlements: Companies****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[55878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding of the United Nations Human Rights Office report on business activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, published on 12 February 2020, reference A/HRC/43/71.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK, along with a number of other European countries, opposed the creation of the UN Human Rights Office's database. Ultimately it is the decision of an individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The British Government neither encourages nor offers support to such activity.

**■ Libya: Human Rights****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[54927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate

violations of international (a) humanitarian law and (b) human rights law committed by all armed actors in Libya.

**James Cleverly:**

Ensuring justice and reconciliation will be a vital part of securing a lasting peace in Libya. It is imperative that those who have committed and are still committing violations and abuses, including unlawful killings, do not evade justice for their crimes. The UK has strongly supported resolutions at the United Nations Human Rights Council aimed at increasing accountability, and fully supports the International Criminal Court's efforts to hold accountable those responsible for the most serious crimes in Libya. Where justice through prosecutions is proving elusive or limited, the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council can promote greater accountability and deter further violations and abuses.

■ **Libya: Russia**

**Chris Bryant:**

[[55890](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking with his NATO counterparts to mitigate the threat posed by Russia's attempts to develop a military airbase close to NATO's southern flank in Libya; and if he will make a statement.

**James Cleverly:**

We continue to discuss with NATO allies how we must continue to work together on Libya to encourage all parties to de-escalate, support the UN ceasefire talks and respect the UN arms embargo. We share the concerns of the US and other allies about Russia's reported deployment of fighter aircraft from Syria and Wagner Group personnel to Libya in breach of the embargo.

■ **Myanmar: Sanctions**

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[[56000](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) sanctions have been applied to and (b) assets frozen of those 14 members of the Burmese military responsible for human rights violations.

**Nigel Adams:**

Fourteen members of Myanmar's military are listed under targeted EU sanctions. These sanctions which continue to apply in the UK for the duration of the Transition period, freeze all assets that these individuals may have in the EU, restrict trade and ban travel to the EU. The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) undertakes an annual review of frozen assets in the UK, requiring all persons or institutions that hold or control frozen assets in the UK to report to OFSI. Her Majesty's Government and OSFI do not disclose the value of frozen assets of individual listed persons. These targeted sanctions play an important role in underlining the UK's commitment to human rights, challenging impunity and deterring future violations and abuses. Myanmar is also subject to an EU Arms Embargo.

**■ USA: Demonstrations****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[55883]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the US Administration on threats to use military force against US citizens to suppress peaceful protests in that country.

**Wendy Morton:**

Domestic security policy is a matter for the US. Our Embassy in the US has raised the issue of the protests with the US Administration. The violence we have seen is clearly very alarming. People must be allowed to protest peacefully - peaceful protest remains a vital part of a democratic society and we understand the strength of feeling around this issue.

**■ USA: Homicide****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[55881]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the UN on the (a) murder of George Floyd and (b) deaths of black men by armed police officers and members of the public in the US.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have been clear that the death of George Floyd was appalling, inexcusable and deeply distressing and we understand the strength of feeling around this issue. Domestic security policy is a matter for the US.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE****■ Abortion: Drugs****Scott Benton:****[54270]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of women receiving a follow-up call after taking both sets of abortion pills at home to ensure that there are not subsequent medical complications.

**Helen Whately:**

Abortion providers will discuss possible complications with the woman during the consultation and women will be provided with written advice and information about possible symptoms, including those which would necessitate urgent review. Women have access to a 24 hour telephone helpline should they have any concerns.

Any complication known to the practitioner terminating the pregnancy should be reported to the Chief Medical Officer on form HSA4. All serious incidents should be reported by the provider to their commissioner, the Care Quality Commission and other relevant organisations in line with the framework published by NHS England and NHS Improvement at the following link:

<https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/serious-incident-framework/>

## ■ Autism: Primary Health Care

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[52094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of remote health appointments on people with autistic spectrum disorder.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department has not made an assessment of the effect of remote health appointments on people with autistic spectrum disorder.

We are urgently considering research into the impact of COVID-19, including of social distancing, on autistic people.

## ■ Care Homes and Home Care Services: Coronavirus

**Selaine Saxby:**

[\[53664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help protect (a) care homes and (b) home care providers during the easing of the covid-19 lockdown.

**Helen Whately:**

On 15 May 2020 the Government published a care home support package, backed by a £600 million Infection Control Fund. The package sets out the steps that must now be taken to keep people in care homes safe, and the support that will be brought together across national and local government to help care providers put this into practice.

We are currently reviewing our care homes guidance and will be publishing new guidance shortly. As the easing of the COVID-19 lockdown begins, any assessment of a resident's needs, and subsequent decisions made, must consider individual circumstances and ethical implications, ensuring that the resident is treated with respect so that their human rights, personal choices, safety and dignity is upheld.

We also recognise the vital importance of protecting those who receive care in their homes, as well as those who provide home care. We have published detailed guidance for home care providers to support them to deliver care safely and effectively during the pandemic.

We keep our policies under continuous review during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the emerging international and domestic evidence.

## ■ Care Homes and Home Care Services: Fees and Charges

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[52531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a regionally-adjusted minimum fee to be paid by local authorities for the provision of (a) domiciliary care and (b) care in care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

We expect local authorities to identify and pay an appropriate rate for adult social care in their local areas, taking into account relevant factors. In the interest of transparency, we publish data on the fees paid in different local authority areas. Our latest publication was in February 2020 and is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/865034/iBCF\\_LA\\_fees\\_report\\_Q2\\_2019-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865034/iBCF_LA_fees_report_Q2_2019-20.pdf)

To assist local authorities, we have made an additional £1.5 billion available for adult and children's social care in 2020-21. This consists of £1 billion of grant funding for adult and children's social care, and a 2% precept which will give councils access to £500 million for adult social care. In response to COVID-19 we have provided local authorities with £3.2 billion to support them in the provision of public services, including adult social care. We have also announced the £600 million Infection Control Fund in order to support care providers to reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes.

**Care Homes: Coronavirus****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[37719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has requested that (a) Public Health England, (b) county councils and (c) other public sector organisations (i) collect and (ii) publish data on residents in care homes with (A) covid-19 symptoms and (B) confirmed positive tests for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

Since the start of the pandemic, Public Health England (PHE) estimated that over 192,000 residents in care homes have been tested for COVID-19. Data on the number of residents in care homes with COVID-19 symptoms and confirmed tests for COVID-19 is not currently available or published in the format requested. NHS England is keeping what data it publishes under regular review.

The weekly number and percentage of care homes reporting a suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 to PHE by local authorities, regions and centres is published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/covid-19-number-of-outbreaks-in-care-homes-management-information>

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[43691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to standardise NHS and care home approaches to covid-19 testing for residents in care homes.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Our testing strategy includes ensuring that the approach to testing is standardised and appropriate to the setting. Our overall goal remains timely access to COVID-19 testing for all who need it.

The approach to testing across the National Health Service and care homes for staff, patients and residents is standardised, in that:

- As part of our current prioritisation policy, all NHS and care home staff, patients and residents with and without symptoms are eligible for testing;
- We are working to support equitable ease of access to testing across NHS and care home settings, including allocating 30,000 tests per day specifically for care homes. Additional means of delivering tests to care homes include satellite testing units and mobile testing units; and
- Guidance on carrying out swab testing is available to ensure correct administration and a reliable result. Care home staff should also be trained to check residents' temperatures and measure other vital signs.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[43882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will inform care homes (a) when and (b) where their local mobile covid-19 testing unit is established; and what steps he is taking to ensure that eligible staff who do not have access to a car are prioritised for testing.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]:* Tens of thousands of care home workers and residents have already been tested, either by Public Health England, or at drive-through testing sites, mobile testing units and via satellite testing kits - packages of tests sent to care homes for staff to use on residents. Additional testing is being prioritised for staff and residents at care homes in England that look after over 65s. Care workers who are self-isolating can also continue to use the website to book a home test.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[48447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many residents of care homes have received tests for covid-19 since the announcement by the Government on 28 April 2020 that testing would be extended to those residents.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The data is not held in the format requested.

**Nadia Whittome:**[\[49136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to meet his aim of testing all care home residents and care staff for covid-19 by early June 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* The Department is offering a test to every staff member and resident in every care home in England, whether symptomatic or not. By 6 June, every care home for the over 65s will have been offered testing for residents and staff.

The expanded provision for care homes is being met through increased satellite testing and the deployment of Mobile Test Units. Through these means we are now providing 30,000 tests per day. We have also launched an online portal that makes it easy for care homes to request deliveries of COVID-19 test kits.

**Daisy Cooper:**[\[53630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to reimburse care homes for the sick pay of staff who are instructed to isolate by the NHS Test and Trace service.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2020]:* Small and medium-sized employers, with fewer than 250 employees, including care homes, will be able to reclaim up to two weeks of Statutory Sick Pay paid per employee for sickness absences related to COVID-19. This includes those employees who may be required to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace Service.

The ability to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay is on top of other financial support. Last month, the Government announced a £600 million Infection Control Fund, which is to be used on measures such as helping maintain the normal wages of staff who may need to self-isolate. This is in addition to £3.2 billion that has now been made available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic.

**Care Homes: Government Assistance****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[52241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will match his funding for care homes with emergency funding for homecare and supported living providers to help those settings meet extra costs associated with responding to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

We recognise that COVID-19 is imposing pressures on the social care sector. We have now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care.

On 13 May we announced a care home support package, supported by a new £600 million Infection Control Fund, to take specific actions to reduce the rate of transmission within and between care homes in line with public health advice. While this funding is primarily for care homes, local authorities may allocate 25% of the funding flexibly, in light of local pressures and need. This may involve support for domiciliary care workforce measures.

**Contact Tracing: Computer Software****Nick Fletcher:**[\[52608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the new Track and Trace app will be able to alert people who are hard of hearing.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We continue to work to ensure the National Health Service COVID-19 app is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We are committed to regular audits of the app by independent specialist assessors to conduct usability testing of the app, including dedicated research to solely focus on accessibility, as part of a wider strategy to ensure nobody is excluded. We have published an Accessibility Statement, which will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

**Martyn Day:**[\[52659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the NHS covid-19 contact tracing app is made accessible to people with sight loss.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We continue to work to ensure the National Health Service COVID-19 app is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We are committed to regular audits of the app by independent specialist assessors to conduct usability testing of the app, including dedicated research to solely focus on accessibility, as part of a wider strategy to ensure nobody is excluded. We have published an Accessibility Statement, which will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

**■ Coronavirus: Aviation****Lisa Nandy:**[\[53422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of the 1 June 2020 to Question 45163 on Aviation: Coronavirus, what was the total number of passengers screened during the period in which a form of enhanced covid-19 monitoring was in place from 22 January to 12 March 2020.

**Lisa Nandy:**[\[53423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 June 2020 to Question 45163 on Aviation: Coronavirus, if she will publish details of the system for enhanced monitoring of passenger illness that was in place from 22 January to 12 March 2020 during the containment phase of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2020]:* Symptom screening occurred through an enhanced monitoring process or approximately 250,000 passengers. Inbound passengers were not screened for COVID-19 using laboratory tests.

The enhanced monitoring process encompassed approximately 250,000 passengers. Over the monitoring period, between 22 January and 12 March, 129 ill passengers were identified and 59 of this group were taken for further assessment and COVID-19 testing by the National Health Service. Of the 59, none tested positive for COVID-19.

Enhanced monitoring and enhanced monitoring (by exception) included providing information to passengers through a variety of leaflets and posters at airports, and messaging and announcements in flight. Materials were made available in English

and other languages. Enhanced public health protection measures including early warning of any symptomatic passenger in flight and the submission of a General Aircraft Declaration from the flight's Captain.

Sick passengers who were identified by cabin crew were isolated and then transferred to either NHS hospitals or a specially commissioned facility (such as The London Isolation Centre) and if deemed clinically necessary tested for COVID-19.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Carers**

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[51690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people caring for elderly relatives at home are entitled to be tested for covid-19; and whether they have priority for that testing.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

All symptomatic social care staff, including volunteer carers and unpaid carers, can access testing through the essential worker portal at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>

## ■ **Coronavirus: Children**

**Justin Madders:** [\[49033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all reception age children, including those under the age of 5 years, will be eligible to be tested for covid-19 when they return to school from 1 June 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* By 1 June all children in England, including those under the age of five, will have access to a test if they display symptoms of COVID-19.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[45452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to provide mental health support for non-clinical front line workers helping to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

'Our Frontline' - a collaboration between Mind, Samaritans, Shout and Hospice UK - provides information, emotional support and access to a crisis text service for people working on the frontline.

In addition, the Department has commissioned NHS England to develop a comprehensive emotional, psychological and practical support package for all NHS staff, including non-clinical frontline workers, during and following the COVID-19 response. This currently includes: free access to well-being apps, a confidential staff

support helpline, and a dedicated helpline offering bereavement support. The Department is working to extend this package of support to the social care workforce.

**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[51577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to tracking and tracing process for the contacts of people with covid-19, what sanctions he plans to put in place for people who refuse to disclose details of their contacts and interactions; and what sanctions will be in place for people who are identified as contacts who refuse to co-operate with that process.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]:* We are confident that the public will want to play their part in reducing the spread of the virus to keep themselves, their families and communities safe and to protect the National Health Service. This means complying with instructions to self-isolate. However, if we find that people are not complying with isolation instructions, we will not hesitate to introduce tougher measures.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[51956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether contact information shared with the NHS Test and Trace scheme will be passed to the police or other authorities in the event that it indicates that the infected person has broken lockdown rules during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing.

The NHS Test and Trace service does not share confidential information on the identity of a person with COVID-19 with the police or other authorities.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[51957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the NHS Test and Trace Privacy Notice indicates that requests for subject data to be deleted are treated by the Freedom of Information team and not the Data Protection Officer.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The NHS Test and Trace Privacy Notice directs people to the Public Information Access Office which is responsible for responding to statutory access requests made to Public Health England. The Freedom of Information email address is used for this purpose. The Data Protection Officer email address is for other general enquiries about the use of personal data by Public Health England.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[51964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how NHS Test and Trace employees will securely identify themselves when they alert the contacts of people testing positive for covid-19 by (a) text, (b) email and (c) phone call; and how the trained call handler will identify themselves.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: The NHS Test and Trace service was launched on 28 May 2020 and information on how the service will contact people by text, email and phone is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#how-nhs-test-and-trace-service-works>

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[51994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the test and trace programme will be rolled out and linked to the reopening of schools.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing.

The phased reopening of schools for some year groups from 1 June has been guided by the best scientific and medical advice. It is supported by, but is not dependent on, the NHS Test and Trace service.

All symptomatic individuals in England, including children, will be able to access a test if they need one and our guidance sets out the protocols to be followed in the event of a positive test result.

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[52065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the same criteria in respect of (a) time and (b) distance from an infected person will be used by the NHS clinical contact caseworkers and the NHS covid-19 contract tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government has launched the new NHS Test and Trace service across England. Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service and will need to share information about their recent interactions. This could include household members, people with whom they have been in direct contact, or within two metres for more than 15 minutes.

The National Health Service COVID-19 app anonymously logs the distance between your phone and other phones nearby that also have the app installed. The decision of precisely which other app users are notified will be determined by a sophisticated 'contact risk model', approved by the Chief Medical Officer. The algorithm is published on the NHS COVID-19 app's website. NHS doctors and scientists are continuously updating this model to ensure it is as accurate as possible.

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[52444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent scammers from impersonating people registered and trained as tracers for the NHS test and trace system.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing.

NHS Test and Trace has been developed to Government security standards and we have been advised on measures to keep the public safe. The NHS Test and Trace service uses text messages, email or phone. The Test and Trace service will not ask for bank details or payments, nor will anyone be asked for details of their social media or any pin numbers or be asked to call a premium rate number. All text or emails will ask people to sign into the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing website with a set of unique characters provided alongside a secure link to the site. For those people that are unable to respond via email or text, perhaps because they do not have those options available to them, a phone-based service will contact them and support them through the process.

If the public are concerned about whether a call or email they receive comes from NHS Test and Trace service they can visit GOV.UK and view a page which lists the official phone numbers used by this service.

**■ Coronavirus: Humber Bridge****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[48329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests through the Humber Bridge car park covid-19 testing centre (a) were taken, (b) received results that were notified to test subjects and (c) were (i) positive and (ii) negative per day since the opening of that facility.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The data is not held in the format requested.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[48332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests completed at the Humber Bridge car park testing centre have resulted in an unclear outcome.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We do not publish data broken down by test centre. As of 24 May, 50 Regional Testing Sites were open. In addition, we had 96 testing units, with an additional 20 supporting care homes as of the same date and time. Across this testing programme, we have tested over 1,000,000 people for COVID-19.

**■ Coronavirus: Nottinghamshire****Ben Bradley:**[\[44030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, where the covid-19 testing centres will be located in (a) Mansfield and (b) Ashfield; and what the timetable is for opening those testing centres.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have expanded test accessibility by increasing the number of home test kits that are couriered to and from the home. These are available to book by eligible individuals using the self-referral portal. We have also increased mobile testing, with 96 units currently operational (8 May 2020). Mobile test units are being deployed to areas that have a pressing need for testing by individuals who cannot access regional test sites. Local Resilience Forums coordinate with local partners to inform the Department of where a unit is required.

**■ Coronavirus: Screening****Mike Amesbury:**[\[40753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what targets his Department has for providing covid-19 test results to people who have been in the community; and what proportion of those test results have been delivered within that target time to date.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]*: We set a target of performing 100,000 tests per day by the end of April. We met that target by expanding test capacity across the country. This includes the opening of 49 50 regional test sites, increasing the number of home test kits available for distribution and we currently have 96 mobile test units in operation as at 4 April 2020. Test results are received within 48 hours, and for home tests in up to 72 hours.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[43679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will extending eligibility for covid-19 testing to include people under 65 who have symptoms and who receive care in (a) their own homes and (b) supported living; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Testing is a vital part of the United Kingdom's response and millions of people from across the UK are now eligible to receive a test if they need one.

The Government's overall ambition is to ensure that everyone who needs a test can get one. We will continue to be guided by the science and regularly review eligibility for testing.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[43880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to return the mobile covid-19 testing unit to Easington constituency.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]*: The Department works with local partners, including the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), to identify where to send mobile testing units. LRFs have been briefed on the process of booking mobile units.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[43881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to increase the supply of covid 19 home testing kits.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]*: Home testing has been expanded over several weeks from the initial piloting phase, through to the large-scale ramp up where thousands of home tests are available on a day basis. We continue to expand the number of test kits available on a daily basis.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[43933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many tests for covid-19 undertaken at home have been processed since the start of the outbreak of that disease.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Home testing has been expanded over several weeks from the initial piloting phase, through to the large-scale ramp up where thousands of home tests are available on a daily basis. As at 8 May 2020, over 134,000 home tests have been dispatched and more than 105,000 completed samples have been collected and this number increases daily.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[44011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what systems are in place to ensure that covid-19 test results are (a) concluded and communicated in a timely manner and (b) followed-up by people who do not receive their test result within 48 hours of their test.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Test results are returned within 48 hours, or 72 hours for home tests by text or email. For the small proportion of results that are returned outside of these timeframes, individuals can contact the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on 0300 303 2713 between the hours of 7am – 11pm. The call centre can take the individual's details for the result to be investigated.

We are committed to our target of turning test results around in 24 hours.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[44012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of covid-19 test results have been concluded and communicated to the person concerned within the target of 48 hours.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

As at 8 May 2020, around 98% of all COVID-19 test results are sent automatically to the individual within 48 hours, or 72 hours for home tests. There have been occasions where test results have been communicated later than the stated timeframes. We have developed the testing programme rapidly and therefore experienced some operational issues causing delays. We work to continue improving

our response times to ensure that all individuals receive their test results in a timely manner.

**Neil Coyle:**[\[45245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of coronavirus tests for people who live in the same household as an NHS worker.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government's Testing Strategy, titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): scaling up testing programmes', was published on 4 April and outlined the Government's approach and strategy for COVID-19 in the United Kingdom. Since then, the Government has been working to implement the plans, including expanding testing capacity and expanding eligibility based on a clear rationale that includes clinical need and understanding how the virus is moving through the population, to support the focusing of resources.

Currently, all National Health Service staff (with and without COVID-19 symptoms) are eligible for testing, in line with NHS England guidance. Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 and lives with NHS or other essential workers is also eligible for testing.

**Rosie Cooper:**[\[48334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when will my constituent receive the results of their covid-19 test reference MES00016038 of 4 May 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]*: We cannot provide test results for individual members of the public. We strongly advise that the hon. Member's constituent to take up this query with the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre. The Call Centre handles all enquiries about the testing process, from how someone books an appointment, to what they do upon receipt of their result.

The Coronavirus Testing Call Centre can be contacted on 119 (in England and Wales) and 0300 303 2713 (in Scotland and Northern Ireland) between the hours of 7am – 11pm.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[48449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the median time for the results of a covid-19 test taken at a testing facility to be received by a patient.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The data is not held in the format requested.

**Alex Sobel:**[\[52422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason why the Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has requested that laboratories pause processing self-collect finger-prick blood samples for covid-19 antibody testing.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: Some United Kingdom providers such as high street pharmacies and private healthcare providers offer COVID-19 antibody testing for members of the public.*

The test involves collecting a fingerprick blood sample into a small container following a set of instructions. The container is then sent to a laboratory for analysis and the results are returned direct to the person who took the test, with an indication of the reliability of the result.

The laboratory tests are CE marked and safe for use on blood drawn from the vein by a healthcare professional but have not yet been validated by the manufacturer of the test to be used with a fingerprick blood sample. The sample collection kits have not yet been validated for home use and we cannot be sure that lay people collecting samples themselves at home currently have sufficient support to collect samples in a way that will enable a laboratory to process to a reliable result.

**Sir Charles Walker:****[54870]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance the Medical Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has issued in relation to the releasing of results to laboratories analysing test results of swabs provided to them by employers; and if he will make statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2020]: The release of results to laboratories analysing test results of swabs provided to them by employers is not within the remit of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and so it has not issued any guidance on this subject.*

**■ Coronavirus: Testing****Rosie Cooper:****[37535]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that testing for covid 19 is (a) accurate and (b) accessible.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government published its testing strategy on 4 April. The strategy, which addresses the importance of testing accessibility and accuracy, is available at the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878121/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878121/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-strategy.pdf)

Since the strategy was published, the Government has met its target to deliver 100,000 tests per day, and our overall ambition is to provide enough swab tests for everyone that needs one.

**■ Counselling: Finance****Paul Girvan:****[52376]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, if he will increase the level of funding allocated from the public purse for the provision of mental health counselling for NHS staff.

**Helen Whately:**

At the beginning of the COVID-19 response, the Department commissioned NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a comprehensive package of emotional, psychological, and practical support for National Health Service staff.

In response, NHS England and NHS Improvement have invested in a range of services to support the health and mental wellbeing of NHS staff, including virtual staff common rooms for mutual support, a dedicated support helpline and text service (in partnership with Samaritans), and a separate helpline offering bereavement support (in partnership with Hospice UK).

More information on support available to all NHS staff is online at the following link:  
[people.nhs.uk/help](http://people.nhs.uk/help)

**■ Deloitte: Coronavirus****Stella Creasy:****[48980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the contract with Deloitte for covid-19 testing requires that company to report positive cases to Public Health England and to local authorities.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* As an existing professional services provider to the public sector, Deloitte's expertise is being used to supplement in-house resource to deliver significant programmes of work, which currently includes the national response to COVID-19. The contract with Deloitte does not require the company to report positive cases to Public Health England and local authorities.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus****Jess Phillips:****[52048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will place in the Library a copy of (a) safeguarding documents and (b) risk assessments that were undertaken to ensure that the test, track, trace and isolate scheme would be safe for victims of domestic and interpersonal abuse, in order to ensure that scheme cannot be used to isolate victims of abuse maliciously.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]:* We are assessing the impact of the Test and Trace service on an ongoing basis as the service develops, taking into account those in vulnerable groups such as victims of domestic violence and abuse. This assessment

is being used to inform policy development and actions to mitigate any impacts identified. A package of mitigations has been put in place to reduce the impact self-isolation may have on those affected by domestic abuse, including Government funding to domestic abuse charities and the launch of a new public awareness campaign highlighting the support available.

We have prioritised security and privacy in all stages of the service's development and are considering steps to further safeguard it from malicious use.

#### ■ Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust: Coronavirus

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[46577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the North East having the highest covid-19 infection rates in the UK, for what reason no covid-19 testing kits were allocated to Queen Elizabeth Gateshead Microbiology department in week the commencing 11 May 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* Whilst across the United Kingdom there are enough testing supplies to deliver our testing strategy, our testing supplies team are working with the regional pathology networks to address any localised supply issues as and when they arise. We are ensuring the required capacity is available across the local network, and making sure tests are sent to Pillar 2 when appropriate to make best use of the available capacity across the system. We will continue to build increased resilience across the National Health Service for sites reliant on proprietary systems through supporting the pathology networks and by supporting deployment of open source reagents nationally.

#### ■ Health Services: Coronavirus

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[40660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of testing all healthcare workers and GPs for covid-19 even if they are not displaying symptoms.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We are now testing all National Health Service workers and patients without symptoms where there is a clinical need. This is in line with NHS England guidance. Used in the correct circumstances, testing of asymptomatic individuals can have a number of benefits, including:

- Developing understanding of prevalence and incidence of infection and how both change over time;
- Exploring key vectors of transmission and effectiveness of public health interventions; and
- Supporting infection control, providing an ability to proactively identify those who are yet to develop COVID-19 symptoms.

**Mike Amesbury:****[40752]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the average time taken for health care workers and members of their households who are showing covid-19 symptoms to (a) book an appointment for a covid-19 test, (b) be so tested and (c) receive the results of that test.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]: Healthcare workers were classified as 'essential' and were therefore prioritised for testing under the National Testing Programme. Trusts can also refer their staff for testing directl. All National Health Service staff can now register for tests whether or not they are symptomatic. Test results are received within 48 hours, or up to 72 hours for home testing.*

**Justin Madders:****[43965]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Imperial College's publication of 23 April 2020 entitled Report 16: Role of testing in COVID-19, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his Department's policies of the finding that weekly covid-19 screening for healthcare workers, irrespective of their symptoms, is estimated to reduce their contribution to covid-19 transmission by 25 to 33 per cent.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: Regular testing of specific groups can be beneficial provided there is a clear clinical rationale. And there is some evidence that repeat testing of National Health Service staff can help to reduce the rate of transmission.*

Increased testing capacity means we will now be able to extend regular testing to asymptomatic staff, guided by Public Health England and clinical advice. This approach is currently being piloted in a number of acute, community and mental health providers, which will inform further roll out in the future.

**Justin Madders:****[43966]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 5 May 2020, Official Report, column 493 on Covid-19 Update, when he plans to roll out regular covid-19 testing of asymptomatic healthcare staff to all healthcare staff.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: Regular testing of specific groups can be beneficial provided there is a clear clinical rationale. And there is some evidence that repeat testing of National Health Service staff can help to reduce the rate of transmission.*

Increased testing capacity means we will now be able to extend regular testing to asymptomatic staff, guided by Public Health England and clinical advice. This approach is currently being piloted in a number of acute, community and mental health providers, which will inform further roll out in the future.

## ■ Industrial Diseases

**Alexander Stafford:**

[48673]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support people with industrial illnesses in (a) England, (b) Yorkshire and (c) Rother Valley constituency.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government wants everyone to be able to access National Health Service care when they need to, including those who may need treatment for industrial diseases. People who have been diagnosed with severe lung conditions should follow the advice from their healthcare professional and continue with their prescribed treatment regime.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published clinical guidance that outlines advice on treatment and management for those with severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, interstitial lung diseases, dermatitis and musculoskeletal issues at the following links:

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg163>

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/dermatitis-contact#!backgroundSub>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/conditions-and-diseases/musculoskeletal-conditions>

The British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine has published amputee and prosthetics rehabilitation standards and guidelines at the following link:

[www.bsrn.org.uk/downloads/prosthetic-amputee-rehabilitation-standards-guidelines-3rd-edition-webversion.pdf](http://www.bsrn.org.uk/downloads/prosthetic-amputee-rehabilitation-standards-guidelines-3rd-edition-webversion.pdf)

## ■ Maternity Services: Pay

**Jeremy Hunt:**

[48342]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS spent on salaries for (a) maternity doctors, (b) maternity nurses and (c) midwives in 2018-19.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* Doctors who work in a maternity setting are part of the specialty of obstetrics and gynaecology. The National Health Service spent £586 million on salaries for this speciality in 2018/19. It is not possible to separate the time doctors spent in working in obstetrics and in gynaecology.

The NHS spent a total of £126 million in 2018/19 on salaries for nurses who work in a maternity setting. The total cost of salaries to the NHS in 2018/19 for midwives totalled £1.038 billion.

These figures include total earnings paid to staff, Employer National Insurance Contributions and Employer Pension Contributions.

**■ Medical Equipment: Licensing****Chris Green:**[\[52079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's timeframe is for the (a) publication and (b) implementation of the MedTech Funding Mandate; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Due to COVID-19 NHS England and NHS Improvement have delayed the publication of the MedTech Funding Mandate and will not be launching this during 2020/21.

To maintain patient access to innovative devices, diagnostics and digital products NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to fund a range of technologies through the Innovation and Technology Payment.

**■ Medical Records: Data Protection****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[52066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what process his Department used to decide that personally identifiable information collected by the NHS test and trace service on people with covid-19 symptoms is retained by Public Health England for 20 years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Public Health England retains personal data for different lengths of time depending on the public health purpose. Longer-term retention is sometimes necessary to manage and monitor the long-term health impacts of serious public health threats such as COVID-19 and future currently unknown threats to the public's health.

**■ NHS and Social Services: Immigrants****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[49698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much revenue was raised by the Immigration Health Surcharge from (a) NHS workers and (b) social care workers in the 2019-20 financial year.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[49699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much revenue was raised by the Immigration Health Surcharge in the 2019-20 financial year.

**Edward Argar:**

This information is not available in the format requested.

**■ NHS Covid-19 App Data Ethics Advisory Board****Mr Steve Baker:**[\[51917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that members of the NHS Covid-19 App Data Ethics Advisory Board are given unrestricted access to all the information that they require.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]:* The independent NHS COVID-19 App Ethics Advisory Board serves an important role in providing constructive challenge and advice. In order to fulfil its role, the board receives frequent, detailed briefings from those developing the app.

**■ NHS Trusts: Coronavirus****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[38924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS Trusts offer on site covid-19 testing for NHS staff.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

National Health Service trusts have all put in place swabbing arrangements for their employees. This is either on the hospital estate or provided at locations in the local communities near their trust that are accessible for employees.

COVID-19 tests are conducted through pathology networks across England in laboratories. They are conducted at the laboratories with the relevant testing platforms.

**■ NHS: Computer Software****Patricia Gibson:**[\[49037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS (a) apps and (b) other digital NHS platforms being used throughout the UK provide people with covid-19 information and advice that is relevant to the rate at which the lockdown is being eased in (i) England and (ii) the rest of the UK.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* The National Health Service app and NHS website are being updated with relevant COVID-19 information throughout this pandemic, drawing on central guidance from the Cabinet Office, which has a cross-Government Guidance Coordination Team to ensure the most up-to-date and relevant information is made available, representing the latest scientific advice. All health and care content is driven through that process to our national products / platforms. In addition, the NHS website team continuously reviews content, both new and existing to reflect any changes in guidance or where required, to reflect ways the public can access health and care services during this crisis and take steps to limit the spread of infection.

The NHSX COVID-19 contact tracing app will assist with a well-established technique of contact tracing and works alongside the wider Test and Trace programme, which will help ease the lockdown in England and the rest of the United Kingdom. The NHS COVID-19 app provides proximity data for contact tracing - with the goal of slowing the spread of the virus by alerting people who may have been exposed to infection so they can take action to protect themselves, the people they care about and the NHS. We believe this could be important in helping the country return to normality, as we start to look to easing lockdown measures.

**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[51999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the NHSX covid-19 contact tracing app will be integrated into local track and trace plans implemented by local authorities.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The National Health Service COVID-19 app is new technology to assist with a well-established technique of contact tracing. It will work alongside the wider programme of Test and Trace, helping the country return safely to normality. The goal of the app is to reduce transmission of the virus by alerting people who may have been exposed to the virus so they can take action to protect themselves, the people they care about and the NHS.

**NHS: Coronavirus****Grahame Morris:**[\[49659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2020 to Question 41979 on NHS: Coronavirus, in what format his Department holds the information requested.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* The Department does not collect or hold any information relating to National Health Service staff deaths for the purpose of reporting under RIDDOR. The responsibility to collect this information and report it to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013), remains with the 'responsible persons.'

**NHS: ICT****Ben Everitt:**[\[52611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement by NHS Digital on 18 March 2020 that NHS annual cyber security checks will be delayed to 30 September 2020, what cyber security protections are in place for the Milton Keynes University Hospital during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

All organisations that have access to National Health Service patient data and systems should complete a Data Security and Protection Toolkit self-assessment each year. For 2019/20 the deadline for completion has been pushed back from March to September to allow organisations to focus on their COVID-19 response.

To support the NHS and further strengthen cyber resilience across the system during the COVID-19 response period, NHSX and delivery partners are providing enhanced central support to NHS organisations to manage their cyber risks.

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust had already submitted an initial interim self-assessment, against the March 2020 submission, in September

2019. This information is being used by NHS Digital to help inform the support package they are offering to the Trust during this COVID-19 response period to help address any critical cyber vulnerabilities.

#### ■ **NHS: Vmware Pivotal Labs**

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[52061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value was of the contract that was awarded to VMWare Pivotal Labs for work on the NHS covid-19 contact tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

In March 2020, Go Pivotal (UK) Ltd, which was acquired by VM Ware in December 2019, was awarded contracts of £500,000 for app development and support, and £1.3 million for development and deployment of a minimum viable product (MVP) and app to market. In May 2020 the company was awarded a contract of £3 million for development and deployment of a MVP and limited period of support.

#### ■ **Nurses: Coronavirus**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[49627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing Band 5 nurses to fill tracking and tracing roles to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing.

Public Health England's local health protection teams and local authority public health teams are an integral part of the contact tracing system. They will be supported by around 25,000 additional contact tracers, a mix of call handlers and health professionals. Health professional applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role will be considered. The post is not band specific.

#### ■ **Social Services: Fees and Charges**

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[48519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what steps he might take to help mitigate the long-term financial effects of uplifts in care fees as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) Bristol City Council and (b) other local authorities.

**Helen Whately:**

We recognise that COVID-19 is imposing significant new pressures on local authorities and the social care sector. We have now made £3.2 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care.

We are closely monitoring the financial situation of local authorities during the COVID-19 outbreak. Future funding decisions for social care will be determined in a comprehensive Spending Review later this year.

#### ■ Social Workers: Misconduct

**Paul Girvan:**

[\[52369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many social workers have been removed from their post due to (a) gross misconduct and (b) dereliction of duty in the last five years.

**Helen Whately:**

We are able to confirm that there have been 299 social workers that have been struck off Social Work England's professional register in the last five years. This includes those struck off at the conclusion of an investigation and those struck off after a review of an existing order.

#### ■ Temporary Employment: NHS

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[53367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support is available to NHS bank staff who are not eligible for universal credit and have had (a) no working hours and (b) their hours reduced since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[53368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is collecting information on the number of (a) NHS Trusts that have (i) partially reduced and (ii) reduced to none NHS Bank staff hours and (b) NHS Bank staff who are (A) not eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (B) have had their hours have had their hours (1) partially and (2) completely reduced since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

Data from NHS Professionals shows that 2,320 fewer bank staff have taken shifts in April and May this year, compared to April and May 2019. However, those who have chosen to work in this period have taken more shifts on average. Many of these bank staff also have a substantive contract and will continue to be working.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have monitored the number of bank shifts at a trust level. In February 2020, 55 trusts reduced the number of bank shifts undertaken; in March this rose to 89 trusts; and in April this fell to 85 trusts. No trusts that recorded using bank shifts in 2019 recorded nil bank shifts during February, March and April 2020.

If these workers are self-employed, they may be able to access the Government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. Some National Health Service trusts are offering these workers alternative flexible working options, including annualised hours contracts. Some staff have also been offered roles with the Track and Trace programme.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Aviation: Quarantine

**Sarah Owen:**

[[56180](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with (a) easyJet, (b) British Airways and (c) other major UK airlines on the 14-day quarantine period for people entering the UK during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kevin Foster:**

As the health measures being put in place at the border are cross-HMG measures, the Home Office has worked closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) on engagement with airlines.

The aviation sector is important to the UK economy and the government recognises the challenging times it is facing as a result of COVID-19. Through the Department for Transport, Government has kept an open dialogue with the aviation sector and put in place regular structured engagement at both Ministerial and official levels. Recent discussions have included the impact of the proposed 14 day quarantine period.

Home Office and DfT officials jointly held an Implementation Task and Finish Group with the aviation industry on 2 June to discuss implementation of the health measures at the borders and listen to operational impacts and concerns from Industry partners. Easyjet, BA and other major UK airlines dialled in to this meeting. The Home Secretary and DfT Aviation, Maritime and Security Minister held an extensive virtual roundtable discussion on 4 June with various aspects of the aviation and maritime industry on the border health measures due to come into effect. Easyjet, Virgin and Jet2 attended this meeting.

In addition, the International Aviation Taskforce has been established to develop plans for how to restart the aviation sector safely, as well as looking at some of the unique challenges that sector is facing. Both BA and Easyjet are members of the Taskforce's industry Expert Steering Group. BA were invited to the round table but they turned down the invite for unspecified reasons.

### ■ Broadband: Engineers

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[[54993](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to provide support to broadband engineers working on upgrading the broadband network who fear abuse as a result of 5G conspiracy theories.

**James Brokenshire:**

Abuse, threats or harassment against telecoms engineers are unacceptable and where abuse against engineers does take place, the police should be notified so they can investigate and take appropriate action.

The UK telecommunications network consists of over 40,000 telecommunications masts and associated equipment that provides essential connectivity for everyone's

daily life. The security of these sites and the engineers working on them is primarily the responsibility of the companies which own the masts. The Government works closely with the telecommunications industry and we take the security and resilience of the UK's telecommunications infrastructure and the safety of the industry's key worker personnel very seriously.

We know that individuals are setting out to damage 5G masts and we have seen a number of unacceptable confrontations targeting telecoms engineers. These confrontations include a small number of assaults. The NCA has rapidly developed a nationally co-ordinated response. The response to these incidents has been a collaborative one, with law enforcement working alongside industry to combat the threat, we will do all we can to make sure that any criminality is dealt with swiftly and robustly. As part of this response, the NCA has issued guidance for the telecommunications industry to issue to their staff on what they can do to ensure they remain safe and what they should do in certain situations.

Much of the anti-5G conversation is taking place on social media. These conversations have enabled the spread of conspiracy theories relating to masts, particularly their links to the coronavirus. These are of course, unsubstantiated. The NCA and partners are engaged with Social Media companies to take action to limit the spread and impact of these conspiracy theories.

## ■ Data Protection Act 2018

**Conor McGinn:**

[\[56039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review the effectiveness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

**James Brokenshire:**

*The Home Office keeps the Computer Misuse Act (CMA) under regular re-view. The Home Office have been engaged in ongoing discussions with relevant partners in law enforcement, government and private sector to ensure that the legislation continues to remain effective.*

## ■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

**Christine Jardine:**

[\[38955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much of the £2 million in funding allocated to domestic abuse helplines and online support has been directly accessed by those support services to date.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Just under £1.2m of the funding has so far been allocated to thirteen organisations to help support helplines, web-based services and the production of additional guidance for victims. The organisations concerned have been notified of the awards and the Home Office is liaising with them on the necessary processes for transferring the funds.

**■ Home Office: Buildings****Rachel Hopkins:**[\[54301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer on 15 May to Question 43779 on Civil Servants, in how many multi-hub locations employees of her Department are working together with employees of another Department or agency in London managed by the Government Property Agency; what the addresses are of those locations; and what other Departments and agencies employ staff at those locations.

**James Brokenshire:**

Employees in the Home Office are working together with other Departments in one multi-hub location in London, where the site is managed by the Government Property Agency. The address is Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE.

**■ Immigrants: Finance****Stephen Timms:**[\[55845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's target is in weeks, for determining Change of Conditions applications made by destitute families with no recourse to public funds.

**Chris Philp:**

No service standards apply to the assessment of whether the applicant qualifies for a change of condition code, but caseworkers will make reasonable efforts to decide such requests promptly, especially those involving a child or an applicant who is street homeless, disabled or otherwise in vulnerable circumstances.

**■ Immigrants: Health Services****Martyn Day:**[\[54178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of visa applicants in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency that have been liable for the Immigration Health Surcharge since the introduction of that charge.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office has no published data that provides an answer to this question.

**■ Istanbul Convention****Neil Gray:**[\[56004\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Home Office, when the Government plans to ratify the 2012 Istanbul Convention on violence against women and girls.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government takes its international commitments very seriously and we have always been clear on our commitment to ratify the Istanbul Convention.

The Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 requires Ministers to publish annual reports on

their progress towards being able to ratify the Convention. The most recent report was published on 31 October 2019 and is available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/843509/CCS0919132732-001\\_Istanbul\\_Convention\\_2019\\_Report\\_Option\\_A\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843509/CCS0919132732-001_Istanbul_Convention_2019_Report_Option_A_Web_Accessible.pdf)

Legislation needs to pass before we can ratify the Convention, so at this stage we cannot be sure what the timeframe for ratification will be. When this is clear we will set out a timeframe for ratification. The Domestic Abuse Bill had its Second Reading on 28 April and has now begun Committee stage for detailed scrutiny by MPs. Part 6 of the Bill includes provisions for the purposes of Article 44 of the Convention, which requires that criminal courts in the UK have extraterritorial jurisdiction over certain violent and sexual offences. Additionally, the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill currently before the Northern Ireland Assembly provides for a new domestic abuse offence which would criminalise psychological violence in Northern Ireland, as required by Article 33 of the Convention. That Bill also takes extraterritorial jurisdiction in respect of the new offence and so, together with the provisions of Part 6 of the Domestic Abuse Bill, will ensure that the law in Northern Ireland meets the requirements of Article 44.

## ■ Passports: Linlithgow and East Falkirk

**Martyn Day:**

[\[54969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many UK passport holders there are in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency.

**Kevin Foster:**

There is no requirement for holders of a British passport to inform Her Majesty's Passport Office of a change of address during the lifetime of their passport.

We are therefore unable to provide data relating to the number of passports where, at the point of application, the applicant provided an address within the Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency, or within any other geographical region within the UK, as the data could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

**John Howell:**

[\[55931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is not proscribed as a terrorist organisation.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters, including whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription.

**■ Serious and Organised Crime Review****Conor McGinn:****[56040]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the status of Sir Craig Mackey's serious and organised crime review is; and if she will commit to publishing the findings and recommendations of that review.

**James Brokenshire:**

- The independent SOC review has been led by Sir Craig Mackey QPM, former deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, with support from stakeholders and advisors from law enforcement and national security. The review's recommendations cover the status, roles and responsibilities of the NCA, regional organised crime units, and other national agencies pursuing serious criminality, along with local police forces in England and Wales, to ensure they have the right governance, support and legal powers to deliver on their missions.
- Sir Craig Mackey delivered his final report to the Home Secretary and the Minister for Security at the end of February. We are now considering the review's final recommendations
- The Government will consider how the review's recommendations can support the implementation of the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, published in November 2018, which sets out measures to build the UK's defences against this type of crime, track down the most dangerous and determined criminals and bring them to justice.

We will provide details of the key findings of in due course.

**■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[54208]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to waive the requirement for applicants for Settlement Status not to have spent more than six months outside of the UK in circumstances where applicants are unable to return to the UK due to travel restrictions implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Kevin Foster:**

For indefinite leave to remain, applicants must meet continuous residence requirements and are generally only allowed to be out of the UK for a maximum of 180 days in a 12 month period. However, absences beyond 180 days can be allowed if there are serious or compelling reasons and we are taking steps to ensure individuals will not be regarded as breaking continuity of residence where absences have arisen as a result of Covid-19 related travel restrictions.

**Lee Anderson:****[55037]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the quarantine criteria on people entering the UK will be dependant on the mortality and infection rates of the country from which they are travelling.

**Kevin Foster:**

From 8 June, all passengers arriving in the UK without having travelled through another part of the Common Travel Area are required to self-isolate for 14 days, apart from those on a short list of exemptions. This applies to arrivals from all countries outside of the Common Travel Area. These public health measure will be kept under review.

**■ Visas: Carers****Dan Jarvis:****[55980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether care workers will be eligible to apply to the scheme to offer free one-year visa extensions during the covid-19 outbreak to people whose visas expire before 1 October 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Government has announced we will extend the visas for a range of healthcare professionals working for the NHS and independent health and care providers, where their current visa expires between 31 March and 1 October. This offer also applies to their families.

Details of immigration changes, including the extended list of healthcare professionals covered by this offer, as guided by the Department of Health and Social Care, relating to COVID-19 can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-immigration-and-borders>.

This offer is just one part of the Government's response to Coronavirus. We are continuing to work closely with the Department of Health and Social Care on how we can best support frontline health and care workers.

**HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION****■ House of Commons: Coronavirus****Amy Callaghan:****[53632]**

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the risk of covid-19 spreading in the House as a result of hon. Members and staff not wearing face coverings.

**Pete Wishart:**

The Commission is led by the current Government advice on the use of face masks and coverings.

The Covid Planning Group has assessed the potential merits of wearing face coverings. It considered the advice from Public Health England (PHE) which states that face coverings may be beneficial in places where it is hard to follow and maintain social distancing measures, e.g. on public transport. PHE advised that the only work

on the estate that requires face masks for protection against the coronavirus is undertaken by the occupational health team. Face coverings are available for the security team to wear if they wish, whilst processing a person through search and screening, but they are not an essential risk control.

Face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing and regular handwashing which remain the most important actions. As hon. Members and staff can maintain social distancing and have easy access to handwashing facilities or hand sanitiser, it was concluded that face coverings were not necessary, though of course Members and staff are free to wear masks should they wish to.

## ■ Parliamentary Estate: Coronavirus

**Chris Stephens:**

[R] [\[54143\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, how (a) social distancing and (b) other covid-19 safety measures will be enforced across the parliamentary estate.

**Pete Wishart:**

The Commission is receiving regular updates on the social distancing measures introduced to the estate along with the numbers of passholders present and the level of demand for services. These are monitored by the House authorities on a daily basis, and immediate actions taken where required.

It is clear to see the practical steps taken on the estate to enforce social distancing, from the Perspex screens through to the queuing systems. The safety measures can only be supported however with the cooperation of individuals across the estate taking personal responsibility for complying with those measures to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. The Commission fully supports all passholders to say where they feel that someone is not following the social distancing guidelines, and to politely remind them. Should repeated or significant concerns be raised, appropriate steps will be taken to investigate further.

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Local Government: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[\[55865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what is the Government's policy on local authorities furloughing their employees.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

It is a decision for local authorities whether or not to furlough staff, in compliance with Government guidance. However, local authorities are continuing to provide essential public services and contribute to the response to the coronavirus outbreak, and as such the government expects that local authorities will continue to pay their staff as usual.

Where staff are not able to carry out their usual work, Government expects local authorities make every effort to redeploy employees to assist with the coronavirus response. This could include redeployment within the existing organisation, or to support another part of the public sector.

However, as the guidance sets out there may be a small number of cases where the scheme may be appropriate. In these cases, local authorities are expected to use their best judgement in applying the Government guidance.

#### ■ Marriage: Coronavirus

**Bill Esterson:**

[55954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what representations he has received on weddings being held outdoors during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Luke Hall:**

We have been working with the Places of Worship Taskforce and other government departments to consider how small wedding ceremonies could take place safely in due course. Outdoor ceremonies have been raised in these discussions.

#### ■ Property Development: Isle of Dogs

**Steve Reed:**

[55991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the ministerial code and to his discussions with the developer of the Westferry Printworks development (PA/18/01877/A1) in Tower Hamlets at a fundraiser for the Conservative Party prior to making his decision to grant approval for the development on the 14 January 2020, when he registered that discussion, and whether he made that registration to the Permanent Secretary of his Department.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Ministers act in accordance with the MHCLG Guidance on Planning Proprietary Issues and the Ministerial Code.

The full reasons for the Secretary of State's decision are set out in his Decision Letter of 14 January, which is published here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/857952/20-01-14\\_DL+IR\\_Westferry.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/857952/20-01-14_DL+IR_Westferry.pdf)

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### ■ Coronavirus: Charities

**Simon Baynes:**

[55056]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department has taken to support British charities responding to the covid-19 pandemic.

**Wendy Morton:**

UK Civil Society organisations (CSOs) are crucial partners for DFID and play a critical role in ensuring UK aid reaches the most vulnerable in the global response to COVID-19. UK charities, such as Christian Aid and Humanity & Inclusion, are receiving funding to support vulnerable people around the world during the crisis. We have allocated £18 million to charities through the Rapid Response Facility and over £24 million through our partnership with Unilever.

A new UK Aid Direct funding round has also been launched, some of which has been set aside for rapid access by existing UK Aid Direct grant holders who are able to respond immediately to COVID-19. As DFID's country network adapts programming to respond to COVID-19, country teams are considering how they can do this through partners, including through CSOs.

In addition, DFID welcomes the vital role that NGOs will continue to play in service delivery through multilaterals. UN agencies have undertaken a review of their existing procedures related to partnership management and issued additional internal guidance to simplify and expedite collaboration where appropriate. We will be working with the UN and DFID's country offices to increasingly better understand and track eventual flows to NGOs in-country.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Rosie Cooper:**[\[55667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how she plans to build on the UK's leadership at the Global Vaccine Summit to help ensure a globally co-ordinated response to the covid-19 pandemic.

**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. The UK pledged £1.65 billion to Gavi for 2021 to 2025. The funding raised by all donors at the Global Vaccine Summit will enable Gavi to immunise 300 million more children and save up to 8 million lives by 2025. The UK has also reallocated \$60 million for Gavi's Covax AMC, to ensure access in the poorest countries to any COVID-19 vaccine.

As Gavi's lead donor, the UK is using our leadership at the Summit, to strengthen global coordination on the COVID-19 response. The Gavi Alliance, which includes the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, will play a vital role in maintaining essential services, including routine immunisation, throughout the pandemic. Routine immunisation is the strongest shield against secondary outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. The UK is working closely with Alliance Partners, to ensure that routine immunisation is prioritised within countries' primary health care recoveries.

The UK is a key donor to the WHO and has already contributed £75 million to help the organisation lead international efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end the pandemic. This includes: global coordination; planning for country level

preparedness and response; global procurement and supply; the science and research and development agenda; and communications.

## ■ Humanitarian Aid: Coronavirus

**Caroline Lucas:**

[54881]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much of her Department's funding to UN agencies for the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan will be allocated to (a) local, (b) national and (c) international NGOs; and what her assessment is of the speed with which that funding will reach those NGOS.

**James Cleverly:**

DFID welcomes the vital role that NGOs continue to play in service delivery through multilaterals and we are pleased that, following our lobbying, UN agencies are seeking to simplify their processes for NGO partners, to ensure funding reaches them more swiftly. Given the global nature of this pandemic, as part of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, UK funding to UN appeals is pooled with that of other donors, and is therefore not earmarked for any specific implementing partner, whether they are local, national or international NGOs. Instead, the UN's global presence ensures it is best placed to determine needs in-country and identify the most appropriate delivery partner on a country by country basis.

Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) are providing flexible funding to a broad range of humanitarian partners to deliver a holistic response to COVID-19 and other needs. Approximately 64% of the total funding will be granted to NGOs, directly and through sub-grants. In 2019 CBPFs distributed 26% of these funds directly to local and national NGOs.

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 will be working with the UN and DFID's country offices to increasingly better understand and track flows to NGOs in-country. Given the important role that NGOs and civil society organisations can play in tackling COVID-19, the implementing UN agencies have undertaken a review of their existing procedures related to partnership management and issued additional internal guidance to simplify and expedite collaboration where appropriate, in order to speed up the response.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[54882]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what representations her Department has made to UN agencies on the provision of accurate figures on the (a) timeliness and (b) volume of funding from her Department that is reaching NGO front-line responders.

**Nigel Adams:**

My officials continue to liaise with UN partners on all aspects of its COVID-19 response, including their work with NGOs and civil society organisations.

DFID welcomes the vital role that NGOs will continue to play in service delivery through multilaterals. UN agencies have undertaken a review of their existing procedures related to partnership management and issued additional internal guidance to simplify and expedite collaboration where appropriate. We will be working with the UN and DFID's country offices to increasingly better understand and track eventual flows to NGOs in-country.

## ■ Israel: Palestinians

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[54900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 30 April 2020 to Question 38897 on Israel: Palestinians, what criteria her Department used to determine the implementing partner for that programme; and what mechanisms she has put in place to ensure open and competitive funding bids.

**James Cleverly:**

Our people to people programme aimed to build understanding between Israelis and Palestinians, helping build support for a peaceful, negotiated resolution.

During the design phase of the programme, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) approached DFID with a proposal for a comprehensive programme. While many organisations are performing excellent work in different fields, it was judged more effective to fund one partner to focus on a few specific thematic areas rather than funding several grants in a broad range of sectors through a wide call for bids. With this focused approach we were able to add to the research on what works in people to people programming.

SFCG delivered some activities directly and worked through partners in areas requiring specialist expertise. A Committee consisting of SFCG, DFID and FCO officials agreed a robust set of criteria for SFCG's assessment of potential downstream partners and approved the final selection.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ Trade Promotion: Occupied Territories

**James Murray:**

[\[56195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May to Question 42243 on Overseas Trade: Israel, what processes her Department has put in place to exclude from the trade and investment promotion activities, businesses (a) operating and (b) investing in illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Murray:**

[\[56196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2020 to Question 26894 on Imports: Israeli Settlements, whether goods imported into the UK that originate in Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are

excluded from (a) import duty relief and (b) other preferential benefits under (i) the EU-Israel Association Agreement and (ii) the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom does not treat the Occupied Palestinian Territories as part of Israel. The settlements are not covered by the EU-Israel Association Agreement nor by the United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement. Products produced in the settlements are, therefore, not entitled to benefit from preferential tariff treatment.

The Department for International Trade does not provide direct support to business activity in the settlements and my officials work closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to encourage companies to put rights and responsibilities at the centre of everything they do.

**UK Trade With EU**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[53331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations he has received from UK export businesses on the value of a comprehensive, frictionless trade agreement between the UK and the EU.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Task Force Europe, working within the Prime Minister's Office at 10 Downing Street, lead on the negotiation of our future relationship with the EU, including our trading relationship. HM Government will continue to take the views of business and other interested parties into account during the course of negotiations.

My Department listens to business representatives all the time – and we engage with thousands of exporters through our network of domestic and global trade advisers too. My Department's International Trade Advisers offer end-to-end support to businesses on exporting, from developing their exporting strategy to closing deals and obtaining access to finance.

**JUSTICE**

**Courts: Coronavirus**

**Philip Davies:**

[\[54054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2020 to Question 49622 on Courts: Coronavirus, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of making arrangements with the new owners of (a) Camberwell Green Magistrates Court and (b) any other recently sold courts to utilise those courts for a temporary period to help assist with the need for increased court capacity as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answers of 2 June, to Question 49622, and 8 June, to Question 53319.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) officials are looking at how we make the best possible use of the existing estate, as well as creating more capacity. This means considering whether any recently closed courts which are still owned by HMCTS are suitable for reopening, and identifying alternative spaces to further extend provision. Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court has been decommissioned and sold and we are therefore not looking to make arrangements to utilise that court.

**■ Prison Sentences****Olivia Blake:**[\[56201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons people are still being held under imprisonment for public protection sentences; and when he plans to review those sentences.

**Olivia Blake:**[\[56202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons he has not yet reviewed the sentences of people held under imprisonment for public protection sentences.

**Olivia Blake:**[\[56203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's Guidance last updated on 4 June 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19) and prisons, what recent steps he has taken to release prisoners held indefinitely under imprisonment for public protection sentences under the Government's policy to release risk-assessed offenders from prison as part of the national plan to protect the NHS and save lives.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Prisoners serving IPP sentences are still detained either because they have not yet served the minimum term of imprisonment or, where they have served the minimum term, because the independent Parole Board has determined that their risk remains too high for them to be safely managed in the community. Therefore in order to protect the public from the risk of serious sexual or violent harm, we have no plans to change the law in order to effect the release of IPP prisoners other than by a direction from the Parole Board.

We are committed to providing IPP prisoners with opportunities to progress to the point at which they are safe to release. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has in recent years implemented a number of measures to support the progression of serving IPP prisoners.

There is clear evidence that these measures are working. IPP prisoners are being released in large numbers. As of 31 March 2020, the number of unreleased IPP prisoners who have completed their minimum tariff was 1,908. This is down from 2,198 on 31 March 2019.

The End of Custody Temporary Release scheme (ECTR), for low-risk offenders near to the end of their custodial period, excludes those whose sentence is subject to initial Parole Board release, including IPP prisoners.

Public protection is paramount. IPP prisoners are eligible for early release on compassionate grounds, either temporarily (where they are highly vulnerable to Coronavirus) or permanently (where they are suffering from a terminal condition or are physically incapacitated), though every case is subject to a full risk assessment before release is approved.

HMPPS is working closely with public health authorities to ensure that our approach to limit the spread and impact of Covid-19 in the Prison Estate, protect the health of staff and prisoners, maintain safety and order, and minimise the impact of the pandemic on the NHS is based on the best scientific advice. For those who remain in custody, HMPPS has created headroom in prisons, through new temporary buildings and the early release schemes, providing space to shield and isolate vulnerable prisoners and new entrants to custody

## ■ Sexual Offences: Coronavirus

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[56011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the £5 million allocated through Police and Crime Commissioners to support sexual violence services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Chalk:**

We are committed to ensuring victims and witnesses receive the support they need, and that sexual violence services are funded to provide this at this challenging time.

You will be pleased to hear that to ensure the adequacy of funding for sexual violence services at this time, there is in fact £10 million funding available for sexual violence support services during the COVID-19 outbreak, with £5 million allocated by PCCs and £5 million through the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund. This figure was established through close consultation with PCCs and sexual violence support service providers.

We have already committed an extra £4 million to Police and Crime Commissioners for Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), this year, as well as a 50% increase to the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund, to ensure that victims of sexual violence always have access to the services they need.

We have also made almost £600k of additional funding available to enable the expansion and national roll out of digital and helpline services, to ensure that all victims have access to services during this challenging time.

**Jess Phillips:**

[\[56012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the planned timescale is for the £5 million funding to be allocated through Police and Crime Commissioners to support sexual violence services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Chalk:**

We are committed to ensuring victims and witnesses receive the support they need during this challenging time.

You will be pleased to hear that there is in fact £10 million funding available for sexual violence support services during the COVID-19 outbreak, with £5 million allocated by PCCs and £5 million through the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund.

The processes for allocating this funding are currently taking place and final allocation will be made through both PCCs and the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund this month.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE****■ Intelligence and Security Committee****Meg Hillier:**[\[55904\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, when the Intelligence and Security Committee will be reconstituted.

**Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:**

Under the Justice and Security Act 2013, the members of the Intelligence and Security Committee must be nominated by the Prime Minister following consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. An announcement on membership will be made in due course in the usual way and then a motion will be tabled for agreement by the House.

**PRIME MINISTER****■ George Floyd****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[55900\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions he had on the death of George Floyd during his phone call with the President of the United States on 29 May 2020.

**Boris Johnson:**

Details of my telephone call with President Trump can be found on the gov.uk website.

As I have said, I was appalled and sickened to see what happened to George Floyd. Racism and racist violence has no place in our society. This country has made huge strides. But there is so much more to do – in eradicating prejudice, and creating opportunity, and the government I lead is committed to that effort.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Exports: Scotland

**John Lamont:**

[\[54999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of recent trade missions in promoting Scottish exports.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

In 2018- 2019, DIT organised 88 Ministerial visits to 49 export markets, to strengthen trading relationships, promote the UK as a destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and help grow demand for UK exports. A number of Ministerial Trade Dialogues were also held, including with China, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Taiwan, Turkey and Vietnam.

Additionally, the Prime Minister's 33 Trade Envoys undertook 55 overseas visits in 2018-19 to 42 different markets, supporting the Government's overall strategy to drive economic growth.

The benefits of DIT's activities in this sphere reach across the whole of the UK, including for Scottish businesses. HMRC estimated that over 6,700 businesses exported their goods from Scotland in the first quarter of 2019 - more than ever before. Recent work has also resulted in breaking down trade barriers for British businesses in Japan, following successful work by DIT to lift the ban on British beef and lamb.

### ■ Higher Education: Scotland

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[54202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what consultation the Government undertook with relevant stakeholders prior to the decision that student number controls will be applied to Scottish universities' recruitment of English students for 2020.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

Funding decisions affecting students domiciled in England are for the Department of Education to determine, however the Minister of State for Universities Michelle Donelan discussed the matter with Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochead on several occasions prior to the announcement.

This measure, which applies across the whole of the UK, will avoid harmful over-recruitment among providers which could go against the interests of both students and universities.

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[54204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the effect of limits to the number of English students who can study at Scottish universities from 2020 on the higher education sector.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The number controls that we have introduced will allow for similar levels of recruitment to last year with room for up to 6.5% growth. Accordingly, this will not reduce the number of students normally domiciled in England who come to study in Scotland.

**TRANSPORT****■ Aviation: Coronavirus****Bill Esterson:**[\[55955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has received from the GMB trades union on the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the aviation industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

It would not be appropriate to comment on individual discussions. The Department for Transport has kept an open dialogue with Unions representing the aviation sector including GMB, through regular structured engagement at both Ministerial and official levels.

Additionally, Unions are represented in the membership of the Expert Steering Group, the industry working group for the International Aviation Taskforce. Our transport systems are critical to support the restart of the wider economy, we continue to work closely with the aviation sector and those that support it, directly and through the work of the Taskforce, on these restart plans and the longer-term recovery of the sector.

**Gavin Newlands:**[\[56029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the EU Aviation Safety Agency on the establishment and operation of mutual travel without quarantine as a result of covid-19 between the UK and agency member states.

**Gavin Newlands:**[\[56030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the draft criteria formulated as a result of his Departments discussions on mutual travel between the UK and European Union Aviation Safety Agency member states that do not require quarantine as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Since leaving the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2020, the UK no longer participates in EASA meetings. The Department for Transport has not discussed with any member state the possibility of mutual travel without the requirement for quarantine.

**Sarah Owen:**[\[56179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with (a) easyJet, (b) British Airways and (c) other major UK airlines on the 14-day quarantine period for people entering the UK during the covid-19 outbreak.

**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 Expert Steering Group. This group serves as the working group for the International Aviation Taskforce – one of the five sectoral taskforces announced by the Government on 13 May.

In addition, the Department has co-chaired with Border Force three implementation groups with the aviation industry to ensure that the industry is aware of how the new regulations on self-isolation will be implemented.

**■ Aviation: Freight****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[55919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) volume and (b) value was of the freight transported from UK airports to international destinations in each of the last 10 years, by airport.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The volume of freight handled at UK airports that receive commercial traffic and transported to international destinations is collected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and is displayed in the attached Table 1.

The CAA does not collect data on the value of freight handled at UK airports. Information on the value of goods is only available for goods exported to non-EU countries that are cleared for customs purposes at UK airports from HMRC and is displayed in the attached Table 2.

**Attachments:**

1. Table 1 - Freight tonnes - UK airports - 2009-19 [Table 1 - Freight tonnes - UK airports - 2009-2019.docx]
2. Table 2 - Value of exported goods - UK airports [Table 2 - Value of exported goods - UK airports - 2009-2019.docx]

**■ Belly Mujinga****Dawn Butler:**[\[54865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions she has had with the British Transport Police on the availability of CCTV footage relevant to the investigation of the assault of Belly Mujinga on 21 March 2020.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with the British Transport Police on the availability of CCTV footage relevant to the assault of Belly Mujinga at Victoria Station on 21 March 2020. The investigation is an operational matter for BTP.

**■ British Airways****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[55929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times he has (a) spoken to and (b) requested to speak to (i) Willie Walsh, chief executive of the International Airlines Group and (ii) Alex Cruz, chief executive of British Airways since the start of the 2020.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

It would not be appropriate to comment on individual engagements or their frequency. The Department for Transport has historically maintained regular engagement with British Airways/International Airlines Group as an important industry stakeholder. In recognition of the challenging times that the aviation sector continues to face due to Covid-19, we have kept an open dialogue with UK airlines, including British Airways/International Airlines Group, through regular structured and bilateral engagements at both Ministerial and official levels.

**■ Bus Services: Coronavirus****Tim Farron:**[\[55928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to introduce a specific support package for the coach industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We are encouraging coach operators to make use of the wide range of support measures the Chancellor announced. These amount to £330 billion of loans and guarantees for businesses. We are continuing to engage with the coach sector to understand what the ongoing risks and issues are, and how these could be addressed in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

**■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus****Fleur Anderson:**[\[56187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when practical driving tests will be allowed to resume as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Rachel Maclean:**

As the health and safety of staff and customers is key, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has produced detailed standard operating procedures and is working closely with the Department for Transport to prepare for a safe return to testing. It will announce details of resumption in due course.

Before practical driving tests are reintroduced, the DVSA will inform the driver training industry. This will help candidates prepare and reach the standard of driving needed to pass their test.

#### ■ Electric Vehicles: Falkirk

**John McNally:**

[\[54128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many electric vehicles were registered in Falkirk constituency in the most recent period for which records are available.

**Rachel Maclean:**

At the end of 2019, there were 107 battery electric vehicles licensed to an address in the Falkirk constituency, which comprised of 104 cars and 3 other vehicles.

#### ■ Electric Vehicles: Grants

**Layla Moran:**

[\[56159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding from the public purse has been disbursed under the plug-in car grant scheme in each financial year since the inception of that scheme.

**Layla Moran:**

[\[56160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have received grants through the plug-in car grant scheme in each financial year since the inception of that scheme.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Number of grant payments of the Plug-in Car Grant in each financial year since the inception of the scheme in 2010, and the amount of funding from the public purse which has been disbursed under the Plug-in car Grant Scheme in each financial year since the inception of that scheme are shown in the table below.

PROGRAMME	YEAR	NUMBER OF GRANT PAYMENTS FROM PICG	PAYMENTS FORM THE PUBLIC PURSE.
Plug-in car Grant	2010/11 2011/12	406 849 2320 4953	£2.0m £4.24m £11.6m
	2012/13 2013/14	21768 37841 28964	£24.5m £108.5m
	2014/15 2015/16	47963 40382 46561*	£184.7m £99.1m
	2016/17 2017/18	113*	£150.8m £123.8m
	2018/19 2019/20		£267.4m* £8.4m*
	2020/21 (YTD)		
Totals		231850	£985.04m

\*The number of individual grant payments and the amount of grant paid from 2019/20 and 2020/21 do not correlate well because there is a delay of up to 9 months between an order being placed on the Plug in Car Grant portal and the vehicle being delivered to the customer, at which point payment is made. Therefore, the number of

grant payments (46,561) in 2019/20 will rise as orders for cars which were placed on the portal in FY19/20 are delivered to the customer. Total orders placed in 2019/20, including the 46561 for which payment has been made, were 98508.

## ■ P and O Ferries: Coronavirus

**Karl Turner:**

[\[55949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an estimate of the number of P&O Ferries employees on furlough who will be made redundant by the end of June 2020; and if he will make a statement.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

My Department's officials and I have been working closely with operators across the maritime sector including P&O Ferries, to understand the impacts and challenges they face from the global COVID-19 crisis. The Department recognises the contribution UK seafarers make to the economy and we remain committed to supporting them.

The government has announced an unprecedented package of financial measures to support businesses and employees through the Covid-19 pandemic, worth £350 billion. This package includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which will continue until the end of October.

On May 11 P&O issued notice that a 45-day statutory consultation period would commence over plans to make 1,100 staff redundant. The consultation covers all staff who work for P&O both on shore and in seafaring roles regardless of whether they are currently furloughed or not.

## ■ Rail Review

**Theresa Villiers:**

[\[55898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the conclusions of the Williams Review on rail services.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department remains committed to delivering wholesale reform of the rail industry to put the priorities of passengers first.

The Williams Rail Review was in the final stages of drafting at the outbreak of COVID-19. The Government views the purpose of the reforms as important as ever, but further work needs to be done now to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. We are progressing with this work.

## ■ Tolls: Greater London

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[55945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Congestion Charge fee will be reimbursed for Metropolitan Police staff travelling to work at central London sites.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London and delivered by Transport for London. The implementation of the congestion charge, including possible exemptions from the charge is a matter for the Mayor.

**■ Transport: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[56050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to investigate abuse against transport (a) staff and (b) BAME staff during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

That transport employees helping to keep this country moving during this unprecedented crisis should be subject to abuse of any kind, and racial abuse in particular, is unacceptable. Public transport workers deserve our unwavering support, and those who abuse them, physically or verbally, should be left in no doubt that they will be dealt with.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[56209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the level of compliance of transport operators' interpretation and implementation of Government guidelines on personal protective equipment for transport workers.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Keeping transport workers and passengers safe is of paramount importance as we continue to scale up services across the transport network as part of the restart.

Public Health England guidance has been clear that there is very little scientific evidence of widespread benefit from personal protective equipment outside of health and social care settings. Guidance on cleaning of non-healthcare settings and shipping and sea ports and how PPE may be used in these contexts has been published in February and March respectively. The Department has worked with and continues to work with operators to ensure they can meet the PPE needs as set out in this guidance.

The Department has held roundtables and meetings at all levels with operators across the transport sector in the response to COVID-19, including to support with the implementation of the Government's PPE plan and the effective implementation of key measures of social distancing and good hand and respiratory hygiene in transport settings.

Ultimately is the responsibility of operators, and indeed all employers, to assess what measures should be in place for their staff on the basis of the risk assessments they are undertaking in line with guidance and to safely address operational needs.

**■ Travel: Coronavirus****Sarah Owen:**[\[56177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the 14-day quarantine rule for people entering the UK during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Secretary of State has held extensive discussions about self-isolation measures with the Home Secretary.

**TREASURY****■ Bank Services: Coronavirus****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[55083\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support his Department is providing to people who require access to offline or face-to-face banking during the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

Banks, building societies, the Post Office and credit unions are working closely with the Treasury and the financial regulators to maintain branch access for essential services while balancing the needs of their customers with the safety and welfare of staff. The vast majority of branches are open, though many are open for reduced hours.

Banks, building societies and credit unions are keeping their websites up to date and we would encourage customers, wherever possible, to use online services for their banking. If customers are not able to use online forms of banking, they may choose to use telephone banking rather than using a branch. The Government advises any customer who has questions or concerns about their banking to contact their provider.

Bank customers can also use the Post Office for essential banking services as an alternative to their branch and can continue to use ATMs or cash machines as normal for cash withdrawals and balance enquiries. Furthermore, several retail banks have in place solutions for vulnerable customers who may be self-isolating, including making payments through a trusted person.

Furthermore, several retail banks have in place solutions for vulnerable customers who may be self-isolating, including making payments through a trusted person.

**■ Business: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[56059\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to enable businesses that have applied for and not been awarded covid-19 grant funding by their local authority

to appeal the interpretation by that local authority of Government guidance on awarding that funding.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has provided Local Authorities with detailed guidance and FAQs to support them in distributing Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants to eligible businesses.

There is no process run by central Government to enable businesses to appeal the decisions made by Local Authorities regarding grant applications. If a business has concerns regarding their application for a grant or their Local Authority's interpretation of Government guidance, they should contact their Local Authority.

■ **Cash Dispensing**

**Ronnie Cowan:**

[\[55082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with the (a) Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Payment Systems Regulator on a minimum service guarantee for cash; and what the planned timescale is for the introduction of new legislation protecting access to cash announced in Budget 2020.

**Ronnie Cowan:**

[\[55084\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of retailers refusing cash as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and what progress has been made on bringing forward legislative proposals to protect consumer access to cash.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises that cash remains extremely important to the daily lives of millions of people across the UK. The Government remains closely engaged with the financial regulators to monitor and assess risks around cash access and acceptance resulting from COVID-19. This includes working closely with industry to ensure access to cash.

At the March 2020 Budget, the Chancellor announced that the Government will bring forward legislation to protect access to cash in the longer-term. The Government is engaging with regulators – the Payment Systems Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority and Bank of England – and stakeholders across industry while designing legislation, to ensure the needs of cash users continue to be met. Further details on timing for legislation will be set out in due course.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

**Clive Lewis:**

[\[54185\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Government support provided to businesses through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, what assessment the Government had made of the potential merits of making provision of that support conditional on companies avoiding initiating redundancy proceedings for the duration of their receipt of that support.

**Jesse Norman:**

The scheme has been successful in supporting employers whose operations have been severely affected by coronavirus in retaining their employees.

Where a business considers that redundancy is the only option, the business must still follow rules which include giving a notice period and consulting staff before a final decision is reached. Any redundancy process should be fair and reasonable, with appropriate equalities considerations.

To support employees the Government has announced a far-reaching package of support to help individuals through the coronavirus pandemic, including a half-billion pound boost to the welfare system.

**Preet Kaur Gill:****[54989]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) rights and (b) support is available to workers who were informed that they would be furloughed by an employer that has not gone on to honour that commitment.

**Jesse Norman:**

All employers participating in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be required to pay furloughed staff at least 80% of their regular wages or £2,500 per month.

If workers are concerned they are not receiving this, the employee should report the employer to HMRC via HMRC's online fraud reporting tool:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/customs-excise-and-vat-fraud-reporting>.

The Government will retain the right to retrospectively audit all aspects of the CJRS with scope to claw back fraudulent or erroneous claims.

Statutory employment rights will continue to apply to employees on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the same way as before. Unless otherwise agreed, the employer must maintain all other employee benefits as per their employment contract.

**Preet Kaur Gill:****[54990]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people working for umbrella companies who have been eligible to be furloughed but have not been as of the end of May 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

It is not possible to provide an answer in the time available.

**Mr Clive Betts:****[55866]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it will be mandatory or voluntary for employers to pay contributions into the furlough scheme when the Government reduces its 80 per cent contribution.

**Jesse Norman:**

Employer contributions will be mandatory from August for those who opt to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

In June and July, the Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 as well as employer National Insurance Contributions (ER NICs) and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will have to pay employees for the hours they work.

In August, the Government will pay 80% of wages up to a cap of £2,500 and employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions for the hours the employee does not work.

In September, the Government will pay 70% of wages up to a cap of £2,187.50 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 10% of wages to make up the 80% total, up to a cap of £2,500.

In October, the Government will pay 60% of wages up to a cap of £1,875 for the hours the employee does not work. Employers will pay ER NICs and pension contributions and 20% of wages to make up the 80% total, up to a cap of £2,500.

**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[56025\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2020 to Question 48488, on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, what discussions he has had with representatives from (a) the Information Commissioner's Office, (b) the National Audit Office and (c) Action Fraud on his decision not to advise holders of National Insurance numbers when payments have been made on their behalf under that scheme and to which employer.

**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[56026\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, whether HMRC will provide holders of National Insurance numbers with information about payments made to employers on their behalf under that scheme when that information is sought through a subject access request under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2000.

**Kirsten Oswald:**[\[56027\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 12 May 2020 to Question 43961, whether HMRC is exempt from the obligation to provide people with information in response to subject access requests under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2000 in relation to payments claimed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme against their National Insurance number.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC will comply with their obligations under Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to provide information relating to an identified natural person, including information relating to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme,

upon request. Subject Access Requests are processed on a case by case basis depending on the data requested and applying any relevant exemptions.

HMRC do not routinely issue employees with information about returns or claims made by their employers. Employees can report concerns to HMRC if they suspect their employer is abusing the scheme.

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[56176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a Real Time Information (RTI) cut-off date for 2018-19 for company directors who have a history of receiving part of their income through a salary paid annually, where the RTI is usually after 19 March in any given year.

**Jesse Norman:**

For an employee to be eligible they must have been notified to HMRC on a real-time information (RTI) submission on or before 19 March 2020.

Those paid annually are eligible to claim, as long as they meet the relevant conditions including being notified to HMRC on an RTI submission on or before 19 March 2020, which relates to a payment of earnings in the 2019/20 tax year.

Anyone paid annually and notified on an RTI submission after that date will not be eligible for the scheme, which puts them in the same position as those who are paid more frequently and were not notified to HMRC on or before 19 March.

The 19 March date allows as many people as possible to be included by going right up to the day before the announcement and mitigates the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

## ■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Aviation**

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[56181\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to support the airlines to retain staff after the closure of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Some firms will be affected by coronavirus for longer than others, and the Government will seek to support these firms appropriately. It would be challenging to target the CJRS to specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way, and it may not be the case that this is the most effective or sensible way to provide longer term support for those sectors most affected by coronavirus. The government will continue to engage with businesses and representative groups with the aim of ensuring that support provided is right for these sectors and for the economy as a whole.

**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud****Ben Lake:****[56116]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many inspections HMRC has undertaken in relation to potential fraudulent use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

It would not be appropriate for HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to publish detailed information about their operational response during the COVID-19 outbreak.

HMRC will subject Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (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 who make fraudulent claims.

In doing so HMRC will protect essential public services and livelihoods at risk during these challenging times.

**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Shipping****Karl Turner:****[55951]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to protect the employment of seafarers in the shipping industry after the implementation of changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on 1 July 2020.

**Karl Turner:****[55953]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to encourage shipping companies to continue furloughing seafarers since his announcement of changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on 12 May 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

As of 7th June 8.9 million workers have been furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), with a total of £19.6bn claimed. From 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees that have been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim for the hours not worked.

Employers will need to agree any flexible furlough arrangements with employees.

From August 2020, the level of the grant will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work. To enable the introduction of flexible furloughing, and support those already furloughed back to work, claims from July onwards will be restricted to employers currently using the scheme and previously furloughed employees. Further information about the scheme can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wages-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

Shipping companies may also benefit from a range of other schemes. The Business Support website provides further information about the support that has been made

available, who is eligible and how to apply - <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

## ■ Food: Wholesale Trade

**John McDonnell:**

[53994]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the application of business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers.

**Tracey Crouch:**

[54083]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend eligibility for business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers.

**Tracey Crouch:**

[54084]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend business rates relief during the covid-19 outbreak to the wholesale food and drink industry that supplies care homes, schools and hospitals.

**Bob Blackman:**

[54095]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the application of business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers.

**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, such as wholesalers, 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.

## ■ Inheritance Tax: Linlithgow and East Falkirk

**Martyn Day:**

[54964]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how (a) many people paid and (b) much was paid in inheritance tax in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency in each of the last three years.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC publish constituency-level statistics on the number of taxpaying estates and their corresponding tax liabilities as part of their Inheritance Tax National Statistics series online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/inheritance-tax-statistics>.

HMRC suppress data which could result in individual taxpayers being identified. For this reason, all fields for this constituency have been suppressed in each of the last three years.

**■ Jobcentre Plus: Finance****Ben Lake:**[\[56117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to allocate additional funding from the public purse to Job Centre Plus.

**Steve Barclay:**

HMT is working closely with DWP to monitor pressures on the system and ensure Job Centre Plus are best placed to respond to the demand. Job Centre Plus funding is being kept under review.

**■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[56057\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to ensure that local authorities distribute funding from Government grant schemes equitably.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has provided Local Authorities with detailed guidance and FAQs to support them in distributing Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants to eligible businesses.

The Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) have been designed to help the smallest businesses, and small businesses in some of the sectors which have been hit hardest by the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The Government judges that the eligibility criteria for the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund are fair. Both schemes are targeted at small businesses facing high fixed property-related costs. Small businesses are in particular need of support because they are less likely than larger businesses to have sufficient cash reserves to meet these costs. In addition, the RHLGF provides enhanced support to small businesses which occupy properties that are likely to be particularly affected by COVID-19 due to their reliance on customer footfall.

In order to ensure that payments can be made quickly and efficiently to small businesses facing particularly high fixed property-related costs, eligibility for the RHLGF and the SBGF has been linked to the business rates system. However, the Government is aware that some small businesses have found themselves excluded from these grant schemes because of the way they interact with the business rates system. That is why the Government has allocated up to an additional £617 million to Local Authorities to enable them to give discretionary grants to businesses in this situation. The Government's intention is for Local Authorities to prioritise the following types of business when making discretionary grants, as these businesses are likely to face some form of fixed property-related costs:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces, for example industrial parks, science parks, incubators etc, which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- B&Bs which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief

Local Authorities may choose to focus payments on those priority groups which are most relevant to their local areas. Local Authorities may also choose to pay grants to businesses outside of these priority groups, according to local economic need, so long as the business was trading on 11<sup>th</sup> March, and has not received any other cash grant funded by central Government (with the exception of grants from the SEISS).

## ■ Local Government: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Mr Clive Betts:**

[\[55864\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and which local authorities have furloughed workers to date; and how many workers have been furloughed by each of those local authorities.

**Jesse Norman:**

It is not possible to provide an answer in the time available.

## ■ National Income

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[56107\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent forecasts his Department has made of (a) nominal and (b) real Gross National Income for (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023 and (v) 2024.

**John Glen:**

HM Treasury does not produce forecasts of the economy or public finances.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) is responsible for producing forecasts of the economy and public finances. On 14 April the OBR published a reference scenario assessing the potential impact of coronavirus on the economy and public finances. In this scenario real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is assumed to fall by 12.8 per cent in 2020 before recovering quickly, growing by 16.1% in 2021. The OBR assume that real GDP grows by 1.5% in 2022, 1.3% in 2023, and 1.4% in 2024. The OBR note that the Government's policy response should help limit the long-term damage to the economy and public finances.

**■ National Insurance Contributions: Linlithgow and East Falkirk****Martyn Day:**[\[54177\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much National Insurance has been paid by foreign nationals resident in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency who were required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge since its introduction.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue and Customs do not hold information on whether an individual pays the Immigration Health Surcharge. Consequently, HM Revenue and Customs cannot determine the National Insurance Contributions paid by foreign nationals resident in Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency who were required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge since its introduction.

**■ P and O Ferries: Redundancy****Karl Turner:**[\[55950\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will undertake an economic impact assessment of plans by P&O Ferries to make 1,100 staff redundant by the end of June 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises that the news regarding job losses at P&O will be distressing for employees and their families.

We encourage all firms, including those in the maritime sector, to draw on the unprecedented package of measures we have made available to support them through this time.

**■ Pensions: Public Sector****Alison McGovern:**[\[55957\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of suspending the abatement element in all public sector pensions during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

To support the emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has temporarily suspended pension abatement rules for certain public service workforces. This temporary change is only being applied where retired public service workers are essential as part of the Government's response to Covid-19. It includes the temporary suspension of abatement rules in the NHS pension scheme, supporting recently retired NHS staff to return to tackle the outbreak.

**■ Personal Savings: Interest Rates****John Lamont:**[\[55109\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent comparative assessment he has made of the competitiveness of NS&I and high street bank savings product interest rates.

**John Glen:**

NS&I has a core remit to deliver cost-effective financing for government. In effect, customers' deposits with NS&I are a form of government borrowing, and the rates that NS&I offer impact the cost to government of this borrowing. Rates on NS&I products are kept under review and set in accordance with its operating framework to balance the interests of savers; taxpayers; and the broader financial services sector.

**■ Research: Disclosure of Information****Rachel Hopkins:**[\[55067\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that furloughed employees of umbrella companies receive a payment that is 80 per cent of the income that they received before the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

Since the Government announced the unprecedented Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), over 8.9m jobs have been furloughed, helping over 1 million employers keep people in employment.

The CJRS covers employees on any type of contract and is open to any individual who was on an employer's PAYE payroll on 19 March 2020, provided that HMRC received an RTI submission notifying payment in respect of that employee on or before 19 March 2020. Where agency workers (including those employed by umbrella companies) are paid through PAYE, they are eligible to be furloughed and receive support through the scheme.

Depending on the circumstances, either the agency or umbrella company can apply through CJRS for a grant that covers 80% of furloughed employees' usual monthly wage costs, up to £2,500 a month, plus the associated Employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions.

Further guidance for employers and employees can be found on GOV.UK.

**■ Riot Control Weapons: Exports****Rachael Maskell:**[\[54948\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor for the Exchequer, what the value was of exports of (a) rubber bullets, (b) riot shields and (c) tear gas to (i) the US and (ii) other countries in 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 rubber bullets from other ammunition and projectiles. The trade data collected also does not enable HMRC to distinguish exports of tear gas from other spring, air or gas guns and pistols or truncheons, 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 for information on how to extract trade data.

Trade data relating to the value of all ammunition and projectiles can be searched for using commodity code 9306909000. Trade data relating to all spring, air and gas guns and pistols and truncheons can be found using commodity code 9304000000. Trade data relating to riot shields and other plastic articles can be found using commodity code 3926909790.

## ■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[54864\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support people who have been unable to access the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme as a result of incorrectly completed tax returns.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is designed to be delivered quickly and is based on information HMRC already hold. This also provides some protection against fraud and abuse.

The SEISS direction sets out the parameters of the scheme, including the eligibility and payment calculation rules. They include that the 2018-19 return must be 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 a claimant considers that HMRC have made an incorrect eligibility decision, the claimant may ask for a review following the process set out on GOV.UK.

**Dame Margaret Hodge:**

[\[55842\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he will take in cases where a person has successfully claimed through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme but then does not continue to trade after their grant has been awarded.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC published for technical consultation draft legislation on the taxation of coronavirus support payments on Friday 29 May 2020. The technical consultation will run for a period of two weeks, closing on 12 June 2020.

The provisions provide HMRC with compliance and enforcement powers in relation to the schemes administered by HMRC. These include powers to check and recover any amount of a grant payment that the recipient is not entitled to. In cases where HMRC can demonstrate there has been deliberate non-compliance they will have the power to issue a penalty.

The technical consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-legislation-taxation-of-coronavirus-covid-19-support-payments>.

## ■ Tax Avoidance

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[54009\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to (a) investigate and (b) take action against companies who utilised the loan charge method of tax avoidance.

**Jesse Norman:**

Disguised Remuneration (DR) is a type of contrived tax avoidance where loans are paid, usually via an offshore trust, in place of ordinary remuneration with the sole purpose of avoiding income tax and National Insurance contributions. The loans are provided on terms that mean they are unlikely to be repaid. They are no different to normal income and are always have been taxable.

Since their first use, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have opened tens of thousands of enquiries into DR schemes used by both companies and individuals, warned about use of these schemes in a number of Spotlight publications, successfully litigated cases through the courts and agreed settlements to help taxpayers exit tax avoidance.

The Government introduced targeted anti-avoidance legislation in 2011 to put beyond doubt the ineffectiveness of DR schemes. The Loan Charge was announced at Budget 2016 as part of a package of measures to tackle the use of DR schemes and gave taxpayers the choice of either repaying their loan in full, agreeing settlement terms with HMRC, or paying the Loan Charge.

The Government will continue to tackle this type of tax avoidance vigorously and on 19 March 2020, HMRC published their strategy for tackling promoters of mass-marketed tax avoidance schemes. This strategy outlines HMRC and Government ambitions to drive promoters of tax avoidance out of business.

## ■ Tourism: VAT

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[55663\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent representations he has received in support of a reduced UK VAT rate of 5 per cent for tourism attractions and accommodation providers; and if he will make an assessment of the potential benefit to the tourism sector of that proposition in advance of his next Budget.

**Jesse Norman:**

Raising £130 billion in 2019/2020, VAT is an important source of revenue for the Exchequer and plays an important part in funding the Government's spending priorities including hospitals, schools and defence.

Reducing VAT on tourism and hospitality related activities would come at a considerable cost to the Exchequer. However, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chancellor has pledged a range of measures to help individuals and businesses through the crisis, including grants, loans and relief from business rates worth more than £300 billion.

**■ Welfare Tax Credits: Scotland****Ian Murray:**[\[55943\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many tax credits claimants in Scotland have (a) notified a change of circumstances and (b) ended their claim since the 11 March 2020.

**Steve Barclay:**

From the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 there were around 110,000 notifications of change of circumstances from customers in tax credits in Scotland. In the same period around 18,000 tax credits awards in payment in Scotland have ended.

**WALES****■ Wales Office: Annual Reports****Nia Griffith:**[\[55918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, when he plans to publish his Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20.

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales is planning to publish its 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts before the Parliamentary Summer recess.

**■ Wales Office: Buildings****Rachel Hopkins:**[\[54311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to the Answer on 15 May 2020 to Question 43779 on Civil Servants, at how many multi-hub locations employees of his Department work together with employees of another Department or agency in London managed by the Government Property Agency; what the addresses are of those locations; and what other Departments and agencies employ staff at those locations.

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales occupies no properties in London managed by the Government Property Agency.

**■ Wales Office: London****Nia Griffith:**[\[55916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff are employed to work in his Department's London office.

**Nia Griffith:**[\[55917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many staff are employed to work in his Department's Cardiff office.

**David T C Davies:**

The Department has 28 members of staff based in its London office and 22 members of staff based in its Cardiff Office. Staff currently work from home in response to the Covid-19 crisis and attend the office only by exception.

**WOMEN AND EQUALITIES****■ Coronavirus: Disease Control****Rachael Maskell:**[\[54145\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government plans to take in response to the report published by Public Health England on 2 June 2020 entitled COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes.

**Dame Cheryl Gillan:**[\[55833\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what further report she plans to commission following the publication of the PHE report Covid 19 - Disparities in the risks and outcomes.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[56084\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the timeframe is for the publication of the work of the Racial Disparity Unit in response to the report of Public Health England on disparities in risks and outcomes in relation to covid-19.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

As Minister for Equalities, I am working with the Race Disparity Unit and the Department for Health and Social Care to carry forward work to identify and fill the gaps in PHE's review; and work across government to take appropriate steps to mitigate disparities identified. The terms of reference for this work, which include quarterly updates to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on progress, were published on [GOV.UK](#) on 4 June. The timeframe will be announced in due course.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Department for Work and Pensions: Complaints****Ronnie Cowan:**[\[53488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department's Complaints Resolution Team plans to start accepting constituent cases from hon. Members.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2020]*: In response to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic, the Department for Work and Pensions have seen a significant increase in the number of people applying to our safety net welfare system. Our resources are currently focused on making payments and progressing these new claims.

All complaints and correspondence from Honourable Members are still being accepted by the Complaints Resolution Team (CRT) and are being processed and dealt with as soon as we are able. At this time the attention of the CRT is focused on cases that concern vulnerable citizens and unlocking benefit payments. Honourable Members are encouraged to contact the Department if we have not identified a case as a priority.

## ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Pay

**John McDonnell:**

[\[53278\]](#)

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

**Mims Davies:**

The tables below provide the generalist pay ranges, which cover the vast majority of DWP employees.

### DWP Generalist pay scales

#### APRIL 2020 PAY SCALES AA - HEO

Generalist Scales	Employee Deal		Legacy (Opt out)	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
AA London Inner	£20,984	£20,984	£19,662	£19,682
AA London Outer	£20,984	£20,984	£19,118	£19,118
AA National	£19,732	£19,732	£19,118	£19,118
AA Specialist Pay Zone	£19,732	£19,732	£19,118	£19,118
AO London Inner	£24,498	£24,498	£21,011	£22,643
AO London Outer	£23,587	£24,498	£19,601	£22,414
AO National	£20,499	£20,499	£19,118	£19,682
AO Specialist Pay Zone	£20,499	£22,635	£19,118	£21,885

**APRIL 2020 PAY SCALES AA - HEO**

EO London Inner	£30,303	£31,099	£25,182	£29,586
EO London Outer	£28,570	£31,099	£23,743	£28,344
EO National	£26,892	£26,892	£22,424	£25,486
EO Specialist Pay Zone	£26,892	£28,809	£23,425	£27,854
HEO London Inner	£35,754	£38,045	£29,712	£35,262
HEO London Outer	£34,265	£38,045	£28,475	£34,025
HEO National	£31,208	£33,448	£25,935	£31,343
HEO Specialist Pay Zone	£31,208	£34,665	£27,925	£33,515

**APRIL 2020 PAY SCALES SEO – GRADE 6**

Generalist Scales	Min	Max
SEO London Inner	£38,982	£43,920
SEO London Outer	£38,342	£42,641
SEO National	£34,448	£39,674
SEO Specialist Pay Zone	£36,672	£42,139
Grade 7 London Inner	£52,748	£63,079
Grade 7 London Outer	£51,528	£61,898
Grade 7 National	£47,971	£58,135
Grade 7 Specialist Pay Zone	£50,922	£61,386
Grade 6 London Inner	£64,636	£76,843
Grade 6 London Outer	£63,238	£75,797

**APRIL 2020 PAY SCALES SEO – GRADE 6**

Grade 6 National	£59,258	£71,154
Grade 6 Specialist Pay Zone	£62,662	£75,274

**■ Disability: Public Lavatories****Gareth Davies:**[\[55140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that (a) public and (b) hospitality venue toilet facilities accessible for people with hidden disabilities and disabled children.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government, via the Cabinet Office Disability Unit, is supporting the British Standards Institute in its development of a public information symbol to support disabled people with non-visible disabilities.

The Government has consulted on proposals to increase the number of Changing Places toilet facilities through mandating them in a range of public buildings, using the statutory building regulations framework. Changing Places toilets meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.

**■ Employment Support Allowance: Terminal Illnesses****Drew Hendry:**[\[56042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has undertaken to ensure that people classed as terminally ill but have not submitted a DS1500 continue to have their claims for employment support allowance managed in a timely manner.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

DS1500 forms have never been a requirement for a claim under the terminal illness rules but remain the quickest and most appropriate route to gather evidence to support entitlement in these cases. Where it is not possible to supply a DS1500 in support of a terminal illness claim we will continue to consider alternative evidence and work flexibly and quickly with the claimant and/or their clinician(s) to make a quick determination. Supporting people who are terminally ill is an absolute priority for the Department and we will continue to process claims as quickly as possible.

**■ Females: Coronavirus****Amy Callaghan:**[\[54256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on women born in the 1950s.

**Guy Opperman:**

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.

**■ Health and Safety Executive: Coronavirus****Andy McDonald:****[55996]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2020 to Question 49707 on Health and Safety Executive: Finance, what further plans are being developed by the HSE to communicate to protect workers from covid-19.

**Mims Davies:**

HSE is currently promoting the latest guidance and Covid-secure risk assessments to help protect workers from Covid-19. This includes communicating with trade unions, employers, stakeholders and partners.

Activity includes working with national and regional media, promoting HSE's website and microsites through digital marketing and social media activity, running a series of webinars and sending direct marketing ebulletins and emails. This links to continually updated guidance, toolkits and useable assets such as posters and videos on the HSE website and gov.uk to increase HSE's reach and engagement with its audiences, including the general public.

Up to date guidance is available on the gov.uk and HSE web sites and can be found at:

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

or

[https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm\\_source=hse.gov.uk&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_content=home-page-banner](https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner)

**■ Medical Assessments: Coronavirus****Drew Hendry:****[56041]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of maintaining the suspension of face-to-face health assessments until the final phase of the lockdown period is entered during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 June 2020 to Question [UIN 52251](#).

**■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme****Alison McGovern:****[55958]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme on the income of claimants of universal credit.

**Mims Davies:**

Universal Credit takes into account income in the assessment period (AP) it is received. Payments from the Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is treated as self-employed earnings in UC and we will take them into account when they are received. We will not therefore need to readjust previous months' awards.

**■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus****Matt Western:****[49102]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of increasing legacy benefits in line with the increase in universal credit during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Will Quince:**

No such assessment has been made. The Government has announced a suite of measures that can be quickly and effectively operationalised to benefit those facing the most financial disruption during the pandemic.

We estimate that 2.5 million households receiving Universal Credit will benefit straight away from the increase in the standard allowance rates which was announced on 20 March, and which is additional to the planned annual uprating. New claimants who have either become unemployed, or whose earnings or work hours have decreased because of the outbreak, will benefit too; subject to their eligibility.

We have also made a number of changes to legacy and other working age benefits in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including increasing certain entitlements, such as Local Housing Allowance. Up-to-date information about the employment and benefits support available, including Universal Credit, Statutory Sick Pay, New style Jobseeker's Allowance, and Employment and Support Allowance, can be found here: [www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/](http://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/).

It has always been the case that claimants on legacy benefits can make a claim for UC if they believe that they will be better off.

However, claimants should check their eligibility before applying to Universal Credit as legacy benefits will end when they submit their claim and they will not be able to return to them in the future. For this reason, prospective claimants are signposted to independent benefits calculators on GOV.UK. Neither DWP nor HMRC can advise individual claimants whether they would be better off moving to UC or remaining on legacy benefits.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Neil Coyle:**

[55691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claims for universal credit that have been processed by her Department since 29 March 2020 have resulted in people not qualifying for a payment.

**Will Quince:**

The Department has been working to ensure we get support as quickly as possible to those individuals and households most financially affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It has been a longstanding principle of Universal Credit that an assessment of earnings, other income and capital is needed to establish eligibility to target support to those most in need. There may be several reasons why someone is not eligible to receive Universal Credit, will have received a nil award or withdrew their claim. Among other reasons, this includes:

- Speculative claims which were subsequently withdrawn.
- Found new employment (which may at present include being rehired under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or taken advantage of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme),
- Redundancy payments affecting their entitlement,
- The last month's salary taken account. The key principle of Universal Credit is that it's calculated based on income, so if someone's income from work drops, their Universal Credit payment will rise to top it up,
- Their claim may have been found to be fraudulent, and
- Individuals may have capital saved above the £16,000 limit for UC entitlement.

Between March 30th and April 19th there were 767,000 declarations made to Universal Credit, all of which are processed. Of these:

- 71% have received a UC payment
- 13% had a nil award due to earnings
- 7% were withdrawn by the claimant
- 9% closed due to ineligibility
- 1% have outstanding verification preventing payment

The proportion of new claims which generated a Universal Credit payment therefore actually rose in the first month of the emergency, when compared to the January and February figures.

### Notes

- Percentages are rounded to the nearest 1% and the volume of declarations is rounded to the nearest 1,000.
- Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding

- Figures relate to Great Britain only.
- Data for the weeks following the 19<sup>th</sup> of April is not yet available as more time is needed for claims to progress.
- It is possible the award for new claims has been reduced due to earnings from previous employment prior to claiming UC.

## ■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[43915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the £20 a week uplift to universal credit introduced during the covid-19 outbreak will be made permanent.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 12 May 2020]*: The standard allowance in Universal Credit has been increased by £87.67 a month (equivalent to £20 per week) on top of the planned annual uprating. All Universal Credit households will see an increase in their payment and this additional increase means claimants will be up to £1040 better off over the next 12 months.

This uplift is part of a wider package of measures which represent an investment of over £6.5 billion into the welfare system. These measures, along with the other job and business support programmes announced by the Chancellor, represent one of the most comprehensive packages of support by an advanced economy in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

## ■ Universal Credit: Ethnic Groups

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[55987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department (a) holds and (b) reports on the number of universal credit applications by applicants who are (i) white, (ii) mixed, (iii) Asian or Asian British, (iv) black or black British, (v) Arab, (vi) other and (vii) preferred not to say.

**Will Quince:**

Ethnicity information is scheduled for future publication, and the Department is currently aiming to publish the statistics routinely as part of Universal Credit official statistics in due course.

## ■ Universal Credit: London

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[43919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in London have submitted claims for universal credit by local authority area since 23 March 2020.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 15 May 2020]*: Information on new Universal Credit claims is not available by local authority. However, data surrounding starts to UC by postcode area is published online and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

This includes data on the number of new Universal Credit claims in the postcode areas of London up to 9th April 2020.

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Abortion: Club Foot

Fiona Bruce:

[14719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions took place after the diagnosis of clubfoot in each of the last 10 years; and at what weeks gestation those abortions took place.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 February 2020. The correct answer should have been:

**Caroline Dinenage      Helen Whately:**

The number of legal abortions which took place in England and Wales after the diagnosis of where Down's Syndrome was mentioned as a medical condition on the HSA4 abortion form in each of the last 10 years by week of gestation is attached. Information on abortions for club foot, hammer toe or tarsal coalition is not held in the format requested.

Attachments:

1. [Abortion figures for Down's Syndrome.xlsx](#)
2. [PQ14717 \(corrected\).xlsx](#)

#### ■ Abortion: Hammer Toe

Fiona Bruce:

[14722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions took place after the diagnosis of hammer toe in each of the last 10 years; and at what weeks gestation those abortions took place.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 February 2020. The correct answer should have been:

**Caroline Dinenage      Helen Whately:**

The number of legal abortions which took place in England and Wales after the diagnosis of where Down's Syndrome was mentioned as a medical condition on the HSA4 abortion form in each of the last 10 years by week of gestation is attached. Information on abortions for club foot, hammer toe or tarsal coalition is not held in the format requested.

Attachments:

1. [Abortion figures for Down's Syndrome.xlsx](#)
2. [PQ14717 \(corrected\).xlsx](#)

**■ Abortion: Tarsal Coalition****Fiona Bruce:****[14720]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many abortions took place after the diagnosis of Tarsal coalition in each of the last 10 years; and at what weeks gestation those abortions took place.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 February 2020. The correct answer should have been:**

**Caroline Dinenage      Helen Whately:**

The number of legal abortions which took place in England and Wales ~~after the diagnosis of where~~ Down's Syndrome **was mentioned as a medical condition on the HSA4 abortion form** in each of the last 10 years by week of gestation is attached. Information on abortions for club foot, hammer toe or tarsal coalition is not held in the format requested.

**Attachments:**

1. [Abortion figures for Down's Syndrome.xlsx](#)
2. [PQ14717 \(corrected\).xlsx](#)

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

#### ■ British Council

**Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Nigel Adams):**  
[\*\*\[HCWS285\]\*\*](#)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has sought an advance of £60 million from the Contingencies Fund in order to provide a loan of up to £60 million to the British Council, who are a key driver of UK soft power overseas. The British Council's commercial income has been heavily hit by Covid-19, leading to significant losses and the risk of insolvency. The British Council have taken measures to reduce their deficit and cut costs, and the FCO has supported the British Council in accessing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in line with the scheme's eligibility criteria for public sector employers, as well as similar schemes in other countries. This has helped them support many of their workforce, and those employed through its partners, funded through the commercial side of their business. The FCO is also working closely with the British Council on its future strategy, operations and long-term sustainable funding models.

However, without additional support from Government the British Council will shortly become insolvent. The FCO is therefore seeking a Contingencies Fund advance to provide an initial loan of up to £60m to the British Council, drawn down in tranches depending upon need and contingent on the approval of FCO and HM Treasury, to stabilise their financial situation until mid-August 2020. The terms of the loan will be agreed with HM Treasury.

Parliamentary approval for additional capital of £60,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £60,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

#### ■ Hong Kong Six Monthly Report

**Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):**  
[\*\*\[HCWS284\]\*\*](#)

The latest six-monthly report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today, and is attached. It covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019. The report has been placed in the Library of the House. A copy is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office)). I commend the report to the House.

**Attachments:**

1. Hong Kong Six Monthly Report [Hong Kong Six Monthly Report.pdf]

## ■ NATO Parliamentary Assembly

**Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):**  
**[HCWS282]**

The following will represent the United Kingdom at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

Lord Anderson of Swansea

Stuart Anderson MP

Harriett Baldwin MP

Alun Cairns MP

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

Douglas Chapman MP

Feryal Clark MP

Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP

Nusrat Ghani MP

Lord Hamilton

Kevan Jones MP

Lord Jopling

Baroness Kingsmill

Abena Oppong-Asare MP

Alec Shelbrooke MP (Leader)

John Spellar MP

Bob Stewart MP

Heather Wheeler MP

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ Surrender of Offensive Weapons

**The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse):**  
**[HCWS286]**

As part of the Government's continuing action to tackle serious violence and keep dangerous weapons off the streets, we have on 9 June laid draft regulations – The Surrender of Offensive Weapons (Compensation) Regulations 2020 – before Parliament.

These regulations are required as part of our plans to bring in the weapons prohibitions that are provided for by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. These prohibitions will apply to specified rapid-firing rifles and certain other offensive weapons for example, zombie knives

The Offensive Weapons Act provides for the Government to put in place arrangements for the surrender of those items that will become prohibited under the Act and requires that regulations be made to provide for the payment of compensation to those who surrender items.

The regulations which have been laid set out a scheme for compensation, in particular making provision as to eligibility for compensation and the making and determination of claims. The regulations are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure in both Houses. It is our intention to bring the regulations into force at a time when it is safe and reasonable to expect the owners of these weapons to be able to travel to designated police stations in their areas in order to surrender the item.

We will finalise and publicise full details on the surrender and compensation arrangements before they commence. This will include the details on when the scheme will go live and information on how to surrender and make a claim. This will help to ensure that all those who possess the items in question are well informed and are given sufficient opportunity to surrender their lawfully held items to the police and claim compensation for them.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ Machinery of Government

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[\[HCWS288\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Responsibility for the Border Delivery Group, henceforth known as the Border and Protocol Delivery Group, has transferred from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to the Cabinet Office. This change is effective immediately and will help to ensure readiness of the border for the end of the Transition Period and lay the foundations for the best border in the world by 2025. Existing Ministerial responsibilities remain unchanged.

### ■ Machinery of Government Change

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[\[HCWS287\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Policy responsibility for the Official Secrets Acts 1911, 1920, 1939 and 1989 has transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Home Office, to align with wider Home Office work on counter Hostile State Activity legislation. This change is effective immediately.

## ■ Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[[HCWS283](#)]

The United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe is as follows:

**(Gareth Johnson MP - Leader)**

### FULL REPRESENTATIVES

LORD BOWNESS  
DEIDRE BROCK MP  
LORD DUBS  
MARCUS FYSH MP  
ANDREW Gwynne MP  
RUPA HUQ MP  
BRENDAN O'HARA MP  
NIGEL MILLS MP  
ROYSTON SMITH MP  
CRAIG TRACEY MP  
MIKE WOOD MP  
NICK SMITH MP

### SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

TAHIR ALI MP  
BARONESS BLOWER  
SARA BRITCLIFFE MP  
MARTIN DOCHERTY-HUGHES MP  
KATHERINE FLETCHER MP  
PETER GRANT MP  
LIA NICI MP  
KATE OSBORNE MP  
LORD ROBATHAN  
SELAIN SAXBY MP  
BOB STEWART MP  
CLAUDIA WEBBE MP  
JAMES WILD MP

## TREASURY

### ■ Business Plan of the United Kingdom Debt Management Office

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):**

[[HCWS289](#)]

The United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO) has today published its business plan for the financial year 2020-21. Copies have been deposited in the Libraries of both houses and are available on the DMO's website, [www.dmo.gov.uk](http://www.dmo.gov.uk).