



Daily Report

Monday, 29 June 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 29 June 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:29 P.M., 29 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Energy

Sir Edward Davey: [59361]

To ask the Attorney General, how much energy her departmental buildings have used in (a) each of the last five years and (b) 2020 to date.

Michael Ellis:

The Attorney General’s Office (AGO) is unable to provide information on its building energy usage as it is currently sharing a building and there is no way of identifying the AGO’s energy usage.

The Government Legal Department (GLD) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI), who are GLD’s tenants, have used the following:

Energy Consumption (MWh)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-to-date (end of May 2020)
	3,359	3,433	3,399	3,304	4,935	441

GLD publish this data in their Annual Report and Accounts. The 2019-20 publication can be found [here](#). Please note that the 2019-20 total also covers the period of commissioning, decommissioning and relocating GLD’s Head Office from One Kemble Street to 102 Petty France and consequently includes the GLD proportion of energy usage for both buildings during this period..

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have used the following:

Energy Consumption (MWh)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
	3,359,251	3,433,141	3,399,001	3,303,878

CPS publish these figures in their Annual Report and Accounts. The 2018-19 publication can be found [here](#). The figures for 2019-20 will be available in the CPS 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts once it is published. Please note that The Ministry of Justice Estates Sustainability Team is responsible for reporting and managing sustainability in the CPS. Their data is gathered and validated by the Estates Sustainability Team and Building Research Establishment on behalf of

DEFRA. The CPS is unable to report data from locations where property owners are not obliged to provide it. All data is UK only.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) routinely publishes details of its energy use in their Annual Report and Accounts which can be found [here](#). The data for the most recent financial year 2019/2020 is due to be published in the near future.

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Staff

Charlotte Nichols: [\[59902\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether any (a) employed and (b) indirectly employed Crown Prosecution Service support staff have been furloughed.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS has not furloughed any support staff that it a) employs or b) indirectly employs.

■ Treasury Solicitor's Department

Zarah Sultana: [\[63512\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what plans he has in place to ensure that the Treasury Solicitor - Bona Vacantia Division (a) undertakes investigations into the existence of wills for the deceased in an efficient and diligent manner and (b) administers estates in accordance with the law.

Michael Ellis:

The Bona Vacantia Division (BVD) of the Government Legal Department (GLD) deals with the estates of people domiciled in England & Wales who appear to have died without leaving a valid will or relatives entitled to share in their estates in priority to the Crown.

Estates are administered by BVD in compliance with the law and the legal duties which apply to the administrators of estates.

This includes making reasonable enquiries to establish whether the deceased has left a valid will or relatives entitled to share in the estate in priority to the Crown. Such enquiries include publishing details of the estate on BVD's website and in the national and local press; making enquiries of banks, local solicitors and other parties and potentially conducting a search of the deceased's property to establish whether they left a will.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Aerospace Industry: Government Assistance

Gavin Robinson: [\[63358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 59788; if will provide a breakdown of the £6 billion figure referenced in the Answer.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As stated previously, the Government is providing over £6 billion of support to the aviation and aerospace sectors. UK Export Finance expects to support £3.5 billion of aerospace exports over the next 18 months, up sharply from £1.15 billion over the past two financial years.

Under the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Finance Facility, £2.16 billion of loans have been made to airlines and aerospace companies affected by a short-term funding squeeze.

We are also providing support over the next three years for research on the next generation of aerospace technologies, through £450 million of Aerospace Technology Institute programme funding, as well as £70 million through the Future Flight programme.

■ Arts: Intellectual Property**Pete Wishart:**[\[62316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure the protection of the intellectual property of people in the creative industries in the event that a UK EU trade agreement is (a) agreed and (b) not agreed after the end of the transition period.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government's approach to negotiations between the UK and the EU aims to secure an Intellectual Property Chapter that includes mutual assurances to maintain high standards of protection for IP rights, including registered IP rights such as patents, trademarks and designs; and unregistered rights such as copyright, and trade secrets. The approach also reflects international agreements such as the WTO agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property and World Intellectual Property Organisation treaties.

If no further negotiated agreement is reached between the UK and the EU, the arrangements in the intellectual property section of the Withdrawal Agreement take effect at the end of the transition period. These arrangements provide legal certainty and protect the interests of rightsholders and users of the IP framework.

■ Business: Hampshire**Stephen Morgan:**[\[61767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to provide support to (a) local authorities and (b) Local Resilience Forums for the allocation of undistributed funding to businesses in Hampshire that are facing financial difficulties as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has put forward a package of support for businesses in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. As part of this, as at 21 June, local authorities

in Hampshire had paid out over £225 million to over 18,000 business premises under the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund.

On 1 May, the Government announced the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund to support businesses previously out of scope of the existing grant funding schemes. In Hampshire, a further £12 million has been made available to support local businesses through this additional fund.

The Government is working closely with all local authorities to ensure grant funding reaches businesses as quickly and efficiently as possible. As part of this, we have provided detailed guidance and FAQs, regular briefings, and one-to-one support from the Department, as well as a communications toolkit.

Once the schemes have closed, any unallocated funds will be subject to a reconciliation exercise with the Government. We will also provide additional funding to local authorities to meet the administrative costs of delivering this policy.

We are keeping in close contact with local authorities to understand how the schemes are rolling out.

■ **Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups**

Apsana Begum:

[61822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of people working in sectors that have had covid-19 lockdown restrictions eased are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Paul Scully:

The Government continues to monitor the impact of easing Covid-19 lockdown restrictions on Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and other groups with protected characteristics. The Race Disparity Unit's Ethnicity Facts and Figures website publishes data on the percentage of workers in each ethnic group employed by different sectors.

This can be found at:

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment-by-sector/latest>.

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Alex Norris:

[63468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to promote awareness by employers of the potential for prolonged covid-19 symptoms.

Paul Scully:

Someone's ability to do their job can be affected by health conditions such as covid-19 symptoms. Several laws are relevant when managing sick leave and return to

work. These include the Equality Act, the Employment Rights Act and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act.

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. This guidance has been regularly updated in line with scientific advice.

In line with employment and health and safety law, guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive sets out that employers should have policies and procedures on managing sick leave. They should develop these in consultation with workers and their representatives. The guidance states that employers should:

- record and monitor sick leave to help them identify trends and manage risk
- train their managers on how to manage sick leave and return to work
- keep in contact with workers who are off sick, ensuring the conversation remains focused on their health, safety and wellbeing and their return to work
- consider making workplace adjustments to help workers return to work. This could include shorter hours, flexible or part-time working, or adapting work equipment
- review their health and safety risk assessment where a worker's health condition makes them or others more vulnerable to workplace risks
- get professional advice on issues such as fitness to work or workplace adjustments, for example from an occupational health provider.

■ **Employment: Disadvantaged**

Karin Smyth: [\[64245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to ensure that Local Industrial Strategies developed by devolved authorities have targeted plans in place to improve skills and access to jobs in areas with high deprivation.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Local Industrial Strategies which have been published to date are based on robust evidence, allowing places to make the most of their distinctive strengths, address their weaknesses, and maximise their potential contribution to UK productivity. Local Industrial Strategies have a strong skills focus and are supported by analysis by locally led Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), to which Government has given each £75,000 funding for the 2020/2021 financial year. SAPs help places to identify local skills priorities based on analysis of the local area, and agree how these will be met through local education and training provision.

■ **Employment: Industrial Health and Safety**

Claire Hanna: [\[64376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what protections and safeguards are in place for people who have been shielding, have

underlying health conditions or have caring responsibilities and will be returning to work as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Paul Scully:

Employers have a legal duty to make sure the workplace is safe for their employees and should consider whether a person is clinically vulnerable in their risk assessment. In the first instance, employers should support these employees to work from home. Where this is not possible, employers should provide the safest onsite roles available to enable them to follow social distancing measures. The Health and Safety Executive website has specific guidance on the steps businesses should take.

Where HSE identifies employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. Workers can raise concerns through their employee representative, trade union or direct to HSE.

We expect employers to be supportive of people with caring responsibilities during this difficult period. We encourage employers to provide flexible working arrangements for their staff, where possible – allowing for home working and changes to start and finish times. This flexibility can help working parents and carers balance work and care needs.

Employers can still access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for clinically extremely vulnerable and those with caring responsibilities (for employees who have already been furloughed for a full three-week period prior to 30 June).

■ **Hospitality Industry: Social Distancing**

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[63227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2020 to Question 57088 on Hospitality Industry: Social Distancing, what the (a) identity and (b) powers are of the relevant enforcing authorities.

Paul Scully:

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

Depending on the business, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authorities enforce health and safety in these workplaces and will monitor compliance including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

They can take action against any business who isn't complying with their legal health and safety obligations, including providing guidance and issuing enforcement notices to require them to take the necessary action or taking further action, including fines, if they continue to not comply.

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[63228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Answer of 15 June 2020 to Question 57088 on Hospitality Industry: Social

Distancing, what measures are planned to protect customers and employees; and how those measures will be enforced.

Paul Scully:

We have now published (23 June) new guidance for pubs, restaurants, and bars. This supports my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's announcement on 23 June for their reopening from 4 July, provided they are COVID-secure. The guidance was developed following consultation with representatives from the industry.

The guidance sets out various measures for these businesses to consider including calculating the maximum number of customers they can provide services to in a socially distanced manner, reconfiguring seating areas, setting up handwashing facilities, providing clear communications about the rules indoors and outdoors, considering contactless payment methods, adjusting working practices to minimise staff and customer contact, and using outdoor spaces as much as possible.

The guidance is non-statutory but does not change existing obligations relating to health and safety, employment, or equalities. Employers have a duty under UK law to protect the health and safety of their workers and other people who might be affected by their business. This includes considering the risks that COVID-19 represents.

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

Depending on the business, the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities enforce health and safety in these workplaces and will monitor compliance including through inspections and following up on concerns raised by individuals with them.

They can take action against any business who isn't complying with their legal health and safety obligations, including providing guidance and issuing enforcement notices to require them to take the necessary action or taking further action, including fines, if they continue to not comply.

■ **Intellectual Property: Legal Profession**

Pete Wishart:

[\[62317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what new protections are being offered to UK IP legal practitioners who help support IP rights owners after the transition period.

Amanda Solloway:

Officials at the Intellectual Property Office and Ministry of Justice are working together and continue to have conversations with representative bodies over how to best address issues they may face once the transition period ends.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Lucy Powell:

[63350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have applied to the local authority discretionary grants fund since it was established; and how many businesses have received grant allocations.

Paul Scully:

On 1 May, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a further up to £617 million available to local authorities in England to support small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs that are not liable for business rates or rates reliefs, and are therefore out of scope of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF). Local authorities are responsible for defining precise eligibility for the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) in their area, subject to businesses meeting the national eligibility criteria as set out in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

Local authorities have started making payments under the new scheme and, as with the SBGF and RHLGF, we will expect them to report to government on their Discretionary Grants Fund payments on a weekly basis. We are not, however, able to share data on the number of businesses that have applied for or received LADGF grant payments at this stage.

Lucy Powell:

[63351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many businesses have applied in each local authority area to the local authority discretionary grants fund since that fund was established; and how many businesses in each local authority area have received grant allocations from that fund.

Paul Scully:

On 1 May, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a further up to £617 million available to local authorities in England to support small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs that are not liable for business rates or rates reliefs, and are therefore out of scope of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF). Local authorities are responsible for defining precise eligibility for the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) in their area, subject to businesses meeting the national eligibility criteria as set out in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

Local authorities have started making payments under the new scheme and, as with the SBGF and RHLGF, we will expect them to report to government on their Discretionary Grants Fund payments on a weekly basis. We are not, however, able to

share data on the number of businesses in each local authority that have applied for or received LADGF grant payments at this stage.

Lucy Powell: [63352]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding each local authority has been allocated as part of the discretionary grants fund; and how much each local authority has allocated to businesses.

Paul Scully:

On 1 May, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a further up to £617 million available to local authorities in England to support small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs that are not liable for business rates or rates reliefs, and are therefore out of scope of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF).

As set out in the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) guidance, a local authority's funding allocation equates to 5% of the value of the hereditaments they have identified as in scope of the SBGF and RHLGF in their area. Full details of this can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

Local authorities have started making payments under the new scheme and, as with the SBGF and RHLGF, we will expect them to report to government on their Discretionary Grants Fund payments on a weekly basis. We are not, however, able to share a full breakdown of the funding allocated and distributed by each local authority under the LADGF at this stage.

■ Sunbeds: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon: [63313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to reopen tanning salons as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Paul Scully:

We have been taking a phased, cautious approach to reopening our economy, so that we do not risk a second peak of the virus. On 23 June, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced details of businesses which would be allowed to reopen on 4 July, provided they are COVID-secure.

For those close contact businesses not opening on 4 July, such as tanning salons, we will be working closely to support those sectors and will set out further information in due course.

On 23 June, we published COVID-19 secure guidance for businesses in close contact services which will help businesses such as tanning salons prepare for reopening.

■ Sunday Trading: Opening Hours

Mr Clive Betts:

[\[63224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding of the Usdaw survey, published on 18 June 2020, that 92 per cent of retail workers do not want the six-hour Sunday trading cap removed; and what plans he has to take that finding into account considering extension of Sunday trading hours.

Paul Scully:

There are currently no plans to increase Sunday trading hours, although we will keep measures like this under review as we examine ways to support the economy and consumers to manage the impact of covid-19. The views of retail workers and their representatives are an important consideration whenever considering a policy change relevant to the sector. Shop employees (except those employed to work exclusively on Sundays) have the right to opt out of Sunday working.

■ Universities: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Emma Hardy:

[\[63471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many universities have accessed the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme.

Paul Scully:

As of 21 June, a total of 50,482 loans have been issued under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), with a value of £10.53 billion.

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

CABINET OFFICE

■ Borders: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[61841\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the date is of the next scheduled meeting of the Specialised Committee on the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

Stephen Farry:

[\[61842\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the first meeting of the Joint Consultative Working Group on the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol will take place; and who will be invited to attend that meeting.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster updated the House on the second meeting of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee in a Written Statement of 15 June ([HCWS291](#)).

Further to that update, the specialised committee will meet in the coming weeks. As with the Specialised Committee, the Working Group will be co-chaired by the UK and EU and made up of officials from both sides.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[63360\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his response is to the call all for a six-month delay to checks in the Irish Sea in the document entitled: Implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol: What Business in Northern Ireland needs & why published by the NI Business Brexit Working Group.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK Government will continue to prepare to meet our obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol, in line with the approach set out in the 20 May Command Paper, the UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol. In this paper, we committed to providing guidance to business, including our plans for extensive HMRC support for Northern Ireland businesses engaging in any new processes under the Protocol. We will publish that guidance this summer.

We will also continue to engage with business through the Business Engagement Forum, which met for the first time on 10 June and which will play an important part in our thinking as we implement the Protocol.

Louise Haigh: [\[63431\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the Government's timescale is for trialling the new IT system required to implement the checks and requirements on trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland after the transition period.

Louise Haigh: [\[63433\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he last met with business representative groups from Northern Ireland to discuss the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Louise Haigh: [\[63434\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the IT system required to reimburse tariffs paid for goods entering the EU single market under the Northern Ireland Protocol will be operational.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK Government will meet its obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol, in line with the approach set out in the Command Paper published on 20 May, the UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol. As that sets out, our focus is on ensuring that the limited additional processes required by the Protocol are implemented in a way that takes account of all available flexibilities, respects Northern Ireland's place in the UK's customs territory and internal market, and upholds the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

We committed in the UK's Approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol to provide guidance to business, including our plans for extensive support for Northern Ireland

businesses engaging in any new processes under the Protocol. We will publish that guidance during the course of this summer. We will also continue to engage with business through the Business Engagement Forum, which met for the first time on 10 June and which will play an important part in our thinking as we implement the Protocol.

■ Civil Service: Ethnic Groups

Helen Hayes: [64262]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of BAME people serving as Non-Executive Directors in the Civil Service.

Helen Hayes: [64263]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to increase BAME representation among Non-Executive Directors in the UK Civil Service.

Chloe Smith:

The Government publishes diversity data on Non-Executive Board Members on Departmental Boards and public appointees on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The government is also implementing the Public Appointments Diversity Action Plan, which is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

■ Coronavirus: Contracts

Beth Winter: [63527]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) (i) content and (ii) value was of and (b) process was for contracts awarded to (A) Deloitte, (B) KPMG, (C) Serco, (D) Sodexo, (E) Mitie, (F) Boots and (G) Palantir in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

Details of central government contracts above £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Cat Smith: [64236]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister of State on 11 June 2020, Official report, column 388, on the use of Voter ID, what evidence she referred to in stating that voter identification has no impact on any particular demographic group.

Chloe Smith:

Based on the independent Electoral Commission's evaluations of the 2018 and 2019 voter ID pilots, there is no indication that any consistent demographic was adversely affected by the use of voter ID.

The evaluation shows that the pilots were a success and the overwhelming majority of people cast their vote without a problem.

■ Electoral Register**Cat Smith:** [\[64235\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2020 to Question 52145 on Electoral Register, what plans he has to increase funding for local authorities to support electoral registration officers in the running of local elections postponed until May 2021.

Chloe Smith:

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

■ English Votes for English Laws**Ian Murray:** [\[64154\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the English Votes for English Laws process.

Chloe Smith:

It is the case that MPs from across the UK are able to debate, amend and vote on every piece of legislation that passes through the House of Commons as no legislation can be made without the consent of the whole House. The English Votes for English Laws procedure has provided a mechanism for MPs representing English constituencies to consent to legislation that affects England only.

■ List of Ministerial Responsibilities: Coronavirus**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[63246\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 March 2020 to Question 27615, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing an updated List of Ministerial Responsibilities on gov.uk to reflect new responsibilities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQs [57314](#), [57315](#), [57316](#) and [57317](#) on 15 June 2020.

■ Press Conferences: Coronavirus**Caroline Lucas:** [\[62380\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions has not lead a daily covid-19 briefing broadcast from Downing Street.

Chloe Smith:

The daily coronavirus press conferences have been led by the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary, and other Cabinet Ministers as required, reflecting the salient topics.

■ **UK Trade with EU****Chi Onwurah:**[\[64182\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2020 to Question 59762, whether the Government holds any economic modelling of the potential effect of (a) a trade deal with the EU and (b) WTO rules trade with the EU on (i) the North East and (ii) the UK.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQ [59762](#) on 23 June 2020.

■ **United Kingdom Security Vetting****Kevin Brennan:**[\[64088\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his most recent estimate is of the average time taken to process applications to United Kingdom Security Vetting.

Kevin Brennan:[\[64089\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to reduce the average time taken to process applications for security clearance to United Kingdom Security Vetting.

Chloe Smith:

The average time to process a routine application across all vetting activity is 66 days gross as at 25 June 2020. This combines average times across CTC, SC and DV applications. Like many government services, vetting has been impacted by COVID-19. The Vetting Reform Programme is intended to improve performance.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS■ **Churches: Coronavirus****Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[65019\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England has taken to provide financial support to single parish churches to avoid the redundancy, salary review and staff restructuring of employed musicians.

Andrew Selous:

In March, the Church Commissioners and Archbishops' Council announced over £75m of liquidity support to dioceses and cathedrals. This money included allowing dioceses in financial need to access up to three months forbearance on sums required for the national clergy payroll [or clergy stipends] for a limited period and

paying monthly grants in full for 2020. In May the National Church Institutions announced a diocesan grant scheme supported by the Church Commissioners, which totalled up to £35m of sustainability funding.

The Church Commissioners are unable to make grants directly to Parochial Church Councils and parish churches. Parishes employ staff such as musicians, assistants, and lay workers in a variety of ways. Where the Parochial Church Council directly employs an individual, the individual would have been eligible to be placed on furlough under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[65020\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England is taking to ensure that church musicians and choirs can safely resume their work as soon as possible under Government guidelines; and what assessment the Church has made of the implications for its policies of medical evidence on the transmission risk of choirs and congregations in church settings.

Andrew Selous:

The Church of England is working with the Government and Public Health England to restore choirs and singing to services as soon as it is safe to do so. There has been limited research available for Public Health England to use to make an informed assessment about the safety of singing, and the choir of Salisbury Cathedral is currently participating in a study organised by Public Health England to enable it to make these decisions in an informed manner. We await further guidance from the Government and Public Health England once these trials have been concluded.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: War Crimes

John Healey:

[\[62289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date was Operation Northmoor concluded by his Department.

John Healey:

[\[62290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date he announced that Operation Northmoor had been concluded; and how that official announcement made.

John Healey:

[\[62291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the conclusions of Operation Northmoor.

John Healey:

[\[62292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what communication Ministers in his Department have had with personnel under investigation as part of Operation Northmoor in relation to the conclusion of that investigation.

Mr Ben Wallace:

[Holding answer 25 June 2020]: On 15 July 2019, following consultation with the Director of Service Prosecutions and with the concurrence of the independent persons providing external assurance, the then Provost Marshal (Army) exercised his right as an independent authority to conclude the investigation phase of Operation Northmoor.

In line with normal Service Police practice, anyone interviewed under caution and any affected units were notified, once appropriate, that they would not be referred to prosecutors.

■ Caribbean and Far East: Military Bases**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[64091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress his Department is making on assessing the potential merits of establishing new UK military bases in the (a) Far East and (b) Caribbean.

James Heapey:

Defence's global footprint remains under constant review, including the potential merits of permanent bases in the Far East and the Caribbean. We will continue to ensure that our footprint is fully optimised to meet the requirements of our Armed Forces world-wide.

■ Defence: Northern Ireland**Gavin Robinson:**[\[64207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much and what proportion of his Department's procurement budget has been spent in Northern Ireland in each of the last five financial years.

Gavin Robinson:[\[64208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on procurement in each UK region, in each of the last five financial years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) regularly publishes expenditure with UK industry, broken down by both region and industry group.

The latest bulletin on MOD regional expenditure can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-regional-expenditure-with-uk-industry-and-supported-employment-201819>

For Northern Ireland, MOD expenditure over the last five financial years is detailed in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	EXPENDITURE (£ MILLION)
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2014-15	123
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FINANCIAL YEAR	EXPENDITURE (£ MILLION)
2015-16	103
2016-17	107
2017-18	110
2018-19	117

The figures in this table have been rounded to the nearest £1 million and adjusted for inflation using HM Treasury Gross Domestic Product deflators (September 2019).

■ Defence: Procurement

Gavin Robinson: [\[64209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to ensure his Department's budget on procurement is spent equitably throughout the UK.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to ensuring that its procurement and contract award processes obtain the best commercial outcome for the taxpayer. We do this in a way that looks to strengthen UK economy and prosperity, where it is relevant to what is being procured and is fair and non-discriminatory.

To maximise UK economic benefits from defence procurement, the MOD uses the Treasury's Green Book framework. As required in that policy, our spending and investment decisions are appraised on the basis of costs and benefits to UK society overall, irrespective of the location of the expenditure.

■ Defence: Research

Gavin Robinson: [\[64210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the funding allocated by Government Research & Development investment to each programme in each of the last five financial years.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministry of Defence Research and Development expenditure from 2007-19 is available from the Office for National Statistics Dataset for Research and development expenditure by the UK Government.

The report can be found using the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/researchanddevelopmentexpenditure/datasets/scienceengineeringandtechnologystatisticsreferencetables>

The figures are contained in the table below:

MOD Research and Development Expenditure 2007-19

TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE (£ MILLION) AT CURRENT PRICES

Year	Research	Development	Total
2007-08	635	1,505	2,139
2008-09	584	1,406	1,991
2009-10	575	1,177	1,752
2010-11	534	1,159	1,693
2011-12	553	753	1,306
2012-13	565	895	1,460
2013-14	586	931	1,516
2014-15	616	1,088	1,704
2015-16	604	1,032	1,636
2016-17	605	1,018	1,623
2017-18	553	1,081	1,634
2018-19	546	1,101	1,647

Note: R&D expenditure meets the Frascati international definition of R&D.

Research and Development expenditure often covers multiple programme areas and therefore MOD cannot breakdown expenditure at programme level.

■ **Iraq: Detainees**

Jamie Stone:

[\[63455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) civil and (b) criminal claims of abuse during interrogation in Iraq between 2003 and 2009 were subsequently made against the UK.

Johnny Mercer:

Since 2003, Her Majesty's Government has received around 1,000 damages claims and approximately 1,400 judicial review claims in connection with operations in Iraq. The claims received focus predominately on alleged unlawful detention but many incorporate allegations of mistreatment at the hands of British military personnel. In addition, the Iraq Historic Allegations Team received over 3,400 allegations of criminal conduct - most incorporating allegations of mistreatment - by UK Armed Forces in Iraq.

We are unable to say with certainty how many of these allegations of ill-treatment specifically related to interrogation, as this would require cross-referencing with individual files.

■ Ministry of Defence: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[63292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has allocated Official Development Assistance to any programmes that are targeted at supporting women and girls.

James Heappey:

Only a very small proportion of Ministry of Defence expenditure counts as Official Development Assistance. The majority of this is spent on certain categories of Defence education. We have recently implemented measures to improve the representation of women on these educational programmes, in support of the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[64282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Question 59846 on Ministry of Defence: Overseas Aid, which planned activities funded by ODA cannot be delivered during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

The majority of Ministry of Defence's Official Development Assistance spend relates to defence education, both courses delivered by UK teams deployed overseas, and attendance of foreign students on UK-based courses. Restrictions on travel and public gatherings around the world have meant that many courses have been cancelled, and international attendance on other courses has reduced. In some cases, course have been delivered by alternative, virtual methods at reduced cost. A re-training programme for locally employed civilian staff in Afghanistan has also been impacted by closure of educational institutions within the country.

■ Ministry of Defence: Public Opinion

Judith Cummins: [\[62472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spent on (a) opinion polling and (b) focus groups in each month since January 2019.

Johnny Mercer:

Information on spend for opinion polling and focus groups for the whole department is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The information in the table below has been provided by the Directorate of Defence Communications and Army both of whom have readily available figures broken down by month. The RAF has one payment of £2,000 for opinion polling over the timeframe requested.

	POLLING (EXCL VAT)	FOCUS GROUPS (EXCL VAT)	TOTAL COST (EXCL VAT)
January 2019	£32,150	-	£32,150
February 2019	£28,930	-	£28,930
March 2019	£12,540	£13,800	£26,340
April 2019	-	£6,700	£6,700
May 2019	-	-	£0
June 2019	£25,430		£25,430
July 2019	-	-	£0
August 2019	-	-	£0
September 2019	£12,540	-	£12,540
October 2019	£12,890	-	£12,890
November 2019	£1,550	-	£1,550
December 2019	£12,540	-	£12,540
January 2020	£12,890	-	£12,890
February 2020	-	£12,500	£12,500
March 2020	£62,090	£18,500	£80,590
April 2020	£7,400	-	£7,400
May 2020	£14,540	-	£14,540
June 2020	-	-	£0
Total	£235,490	£51,500	£286,990

Polling and focus groups are vital tools within Defence Communications because they provide insight for communications plans and allow us to evaluate the effect of our work. Communication is most effective when the target audience and their behavioural context is understood. By learning more about the general public's behaviours, intentions, attitudes and communication preferences, Government communications can become more relevant, meaningful and impactful. Effective monitoring and evaluation helps us to articulate the value of communications campaigns and also helps us to improve campaigns on an ongoing basis.

■ Navy: Radar

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate expected delays to developing the initial operating capability for the new airborne radar system on the carrier strike group.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[64093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the reason is for the expected delay to developing the initial operating capability for the new airborne radar system on the carrier strike group.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) was informed in early 2019 by industry that there were challenges associated with the development of the mission systems of the airborne radar capability. The programme was re-baselined in the first half of 2019, which included the adoption of an incremental approach to the delivery of the capability to the Royal Navy.

The MOD has worked intensively with its contractors and sub-contractors to monitor the performance of the programme and manage the schedule of remaining activity. New management systems and control measures have been implemented by contractors and additional resources have been assigned. The MOD continues to engage with industry to ensure that all issues are raised and managed at the earliest opportunity to minimise impact to the schedule. The programme remains focused on fielding an initial capability in time to support Carrier Strike Group 21.

■ Veterans: Suicide

Rachael Maskell: [\[63419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with local authority leaders on the sharing of coroner reports on suicide in relation to former members of the armed forces at (a) the UK and (b) local authority level.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence has had no discussion with local authority leaders either at the UK and local authority level in relation to sharing of information from Inquests into the deaths of former members of the Armed Forces where the conclusion that the cause of death was suicide, and there are no plans to do so.

Her Majesty's Coroners are independent judicial officers and do not generally produce reports; the exception being where the Coroner has a concern of a preventable death in similar circumstances. In those specific circumstances where the Coroner might raise a Prevention of Future Deaths Report (PFDR or Regulation 28 report) the Ministry of Defence (MOD) may be asked, where relevant, if it can address any remaining concerns relating to the death. Both the PFDR and the MOD response to it are then usually published on the Chief Coroner for England and Wales

website. The publishing of this report is down to the individual Coroner and the Chief Coroner's office.

The only other "report" produced by Coroners is known as a Record of Inquest (a one-page summary of the Inquest) will be offered to the Interested Persons at the conclusion of an Inquest. It is not a document that is publicly available, or shareable to persons not recognised by the Coroner as an Interested Person, unless the Coroner authorises it.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Art Works and Human Remains: Repatriation

Stephen Farry:

[\[62702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what processes his Department has in place to respond to requests for repatriations of colonial artefacts and human remains from UK museums, universities and other institutions; and what plans the Government has for an audit to be undertaken of such items.

Caroline Dinéage:

Decisions relating to museum collections are a matter for the trustees of each museum, who operate independently of the government. This includes the institutions' responses to requests for repatriation or restitution for colonial artefacts and human remains.

The Department is committed to supporting museums in dealing confidently with all aspects of restitution. This includes supporting ongoing work led by Arts Council England on creating new guidance for the museum sector. This will create a comprehensive and practical resource for museums to support them in dealing with all aspects of restitution.

■ Arts and Libraries: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin:

[\[63451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be lost in 2020 within the arts, heritage and libraries sub-sector as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinéage:

In order to support the sustainability of the Arts sector, DCMS has worked closely with Arts Council England (ACE) to provide a tailored package of financial support. In March, ACE announced a £160m emergency response package to complement the financial measures already announced by the Government and to ensure immediate resilience of this vital sector.

This package includes £140 million of support for artistic organisations and £20 million for individuals, so they can better sustain themselves, and their work, in the coming months. More than 9000 individuals and organisations have been successful

in applying for this emergency funding. Additionally, the National Lottery Heritage Fund launched the £50 million Heritage Emergency Fund, and Historic England has launched two £2 million Emergency Funds.

The Secretary of State, myself and officials continue to consult the Art and Heritage sectors extensively to ensure we fully understand the impacts of Covid-19 and remain well placed to respond as it develops.

■ **Broadband: Rural Areas**

Julian Sturdy: [\[61483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what information his Department holds on the average broadband speed in rural areas in 2010.

Matt Warman:

Ofcom's UK Broadband Speeds report, published in May 2010, estimated that the average download speed delivered to residential fixed-line broadband consumers in rural areas was 2.7Mbps. This was actual experienced speed, measured using a sample panel, and would have reflected the package chosen by the consumer, even if a higher speed service was available to them. Ofcom's latest UK Broadband Speeds report, published in May 2020, found that the average peak time download speeds for rural areas was 38.5Mbps.

Julian Sturdy: [\[61485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of rural households were able to access a broadband service delivering (a) a download speed of at least 10 Mbps and (b) an upload speed of at least 1 Mbps, in 2010.

Matt Warman:

In 2010, neither the Department nor Ofcom published the data requested.

The broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) provides every household with the legal right to request a broadband connection that provides download speeds of at least 10Mbps and an upload speed of at least 1Mbps up to a Reasonable Cost Threshold of £3,400 per premise. However, the legislation underpinning the USO was not passed until 2018.

■ **Broadband: Standards**

Julian Sturdy: [\[61484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of households were able to access a broadband service delivering (a) a download speed of at least 10 Mbps and (b) an upload speed of at least 1 Mbps, in 2010.

Matt Warman:

In 2010, neither the Department nor Ofcom published the data requested.

The broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) provides every household with the legal right to request a broadband connection that provides download speeds of

at least 10Mbps and an upload speed of at least 1Mbps up to a Reasonable Cost Threshold of £3,400 per premise. However, the legislation underpinning the USO was not passed until 2018.

■ **Casinos: Coronavirus**

Alex Sobel:

[\[63485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the evidential basis is for the decision not to reopen casinos as part of the next phase of easing the covid-19 lockdown restrictions; and what criteria was used to differentiate casinos from bingo halls in that decision.

Nigel Huddleston:

As a close proximity venue, with live table games involving handling of chips and cards, casinos are among the group of businesses which are not yet permitted to open. My officials will continue to work with the casino sector to ensure they can safely open as soon as possible.

■ **Cricket: Coronavirus**

Jo Stevens:

[\[64231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the scientific advice to the Government on the cricket ball being a natural vector of covid-19.

Nigel Huddleston:

Officials are working very closely with the ECB and their medical experts to understand the unique qualities of cricket. We are working at pace to shape guidance that will allow the safe return of competitive cricket and other team sports. Any shared sporting equipment may risk transmission, but these risks can be mitigated with good hygiene practice as being adopted across a wide range of sectors.

■ **Dance: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[62323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to allow dance and cheerleading studios to reopen safely as the covid-19 lockdown is eased.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[62324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to publish guidance on the safe reopening of dance and cheerleading studios as the covid-19 lockdown is eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government is committed to reopening indoor sports venues and facilities as soon as it is safe to do so including dance and cheerleading studios.

The Sport Working Group, led by myself, feeds into the Secretary of State's Cultural Renewal Taskforce and ensures strong sector and expert support for the co-development of guidelines and will help leisure facilities become Covid-secure and re-open as early as possible in July.

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.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Public Inquiries**

Lee Anderson: [62608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory public inquiries being undertaken by his Department.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has no statutory or non-statutory public inquiries being undertaken at present.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Public Opinion**

Judith Cummins: [62480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much his Department spent on (a) opinion polling and (b) focus groups in each month since January 2019.

Caroline Dinenage:

The information requested is not held centrally and therefore can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

■ **Escape Rooms: Coronavirus**

Emma Hardy: [64299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when escape room experiences will be allowed to reopen during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

Indoor attractions will be permitted to reopen from 4 July, so long as they can do so in line with COVID-19 Secure guidelines.

People should only visit indoor attractions within their household group (or support bubble) or with one other household (or support bubble).

We have worked very closely with the tourism sector to develop Covid-secure guidance which will help visitor economy businesses reopen safely. This can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/the-visitor-economy>.

■ Football Association Premier League: Broadcasting

Dawn Butler:

[\[61675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which 5 countries did not air the restart of the Premier League this month.

Nigel Huddleston:

We understand from the Premier League that broadcast rights to their matches have been sold around the world, with only five countries not covered as of 17 June - Afghanistan, Cuba, North Korea, the Philippines and Turkmenistan.

■ Gambling

Hilary Benn:

[\[62299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to respond to the recommendations of the recent report of the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group.

Nigel Huddleston:

We welcome all contributions to the debate around gambling, including the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group's recent report, and we are considering its findings and recommendations carefully. We also look forward to forthcoming reports from the Lords Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry, and the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into gambling regulation and problem gambling, to which we will formally respond.

The government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to make sure it is fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ Gyms and Sports: Coronavirus

Ben Everitt:

[\[63537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to enable the re-opening of indoor gyms and sports venues; and and if he will estimate the date on which indoor gyms and sports centres may so re-open.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

The Government is committed to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so including indoor gyms and sports centres. The Sport Working Group, led by myself, feeds into the Secretary of State's Cultural Renewal Taskforce and ensures strong sector and expert support for the co-development of guidelines and will help leisure facilities become Covid-secure and re-open as early as possible in July.

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.

■ Ice Skating: Coronavirus

Ben Everitt: [\[64377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the planned timescale is for reopening indoor ice rinks as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health. The Government is in discussions with representatives from the sport and physical activity sector about the steps required to restart grassroots sport and will update the public when it is deemed safe to reopening indoor sports venues and facilities as soon as it is safe to do so including indoor ice rinks.

■ Leisure and Water Sports: Coronavirus

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[64040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he make an assessment of the potential merits of including (a) water parks operating on lakes over a designated acreage, (b) water-skiing and (c) other water activities in the businesses that are permitted to open from 4 July 2020.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health. The Government is in discussions with representatives from the sport and physical activity sector about the steps required to restart grassroots sport and will update the public when it is deemed safe to open up facilities such as water parks as soon as it is safe to do so.

■ Local Broadcasting: Radio

Daisy Cooper: [\[61808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department made of the sustainability of local commercial radio as a result of the announcement by Bauer to reorganise 50 regional outlets into a national radio network.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We have made no such assessment. The local programming and content requirements for holders of local analogue commercial radio licenses are set by Ofcom under the relevant legislative framework – primarily the Broadcasting Act 1990 and the Communications Act 2003. These are matters for Ofcom.

In particular, Ofcom is required under section 314 of the Communications Act 2003 to publish and keep under review guidance for commercial radio licensees setting out

the detailed local programming requirements that they consider it to be appropriate for local stations to carry.

The relevant guidelines were updated by Ofcom in 2018 to give local FM licensees greater flexibility in how and where local stations produce their programmes, while ensuring that listeners' expectations for high quality local news and other content continue to be met. In drawing up the current guidance, Ofcom took account of the changing patterns of radio and audio listening and the views of radio listeners. The revised guidelines are published on Ofcom's website, and it will be for Bauer to make decisions about how to organise their services while still meeting their regulatory requirements - in particular, the requirements to produce local news and news programming.

The Government has long-term plans to legislate to reduce other burdens on commercial radio while maintaining protections for the provision on local news and extending these requirements to digital radio, where there are currently no such protections in place. We consulted on changes in 2017, and will bring forward legislation when Parliamentary time is available.

■ **Monuments: Protection**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[61661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to protect and promote monuments in the United Kingdom.

Nigel Huddleston:

Responsibility for public statues and memorials rests with their owners, with those deemed to be of special architectural or historic interest potentially subject to statutory protection as, or as part of, Listed Buildings. The National Heritage List for England highlights the significance of historically important listed statues and memorials, and is a resource for educating people about all aspects of our complex past, good and bad. In England, Historic England is looking to proactively support such conversations with guidance, research and advice to owners, local authorities and communities.

■ **Music: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Tracy Brabin:

[\[63452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect on the music sector of the scheduled reduction in Government contributions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Caroline Dinanage:

The Chancellor has been clear that getting people back to work will be introduced in a measured way, avoiding a cliff edge. Therefore, from August 2020, the level of the grant for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work.

The CJRS must be temporary and we must ensure that people can get back to work when it is safe to do so and get the UK economy up and running again.

■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Fiona Bruce:

[64153]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional support his Department plans to provide to (a) theatres and (b) the performing arts sector in Cheshire East to help that sector recover from the effect of the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinéage:

This Government recognises how severely regional theatres, and the wider Arts sector, have been hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

In order to support the Arts sector through the pandemic, DCMS has worked closely with Arts Council England (ACE) to provide a tailored package of financial support. In March, ACE announced a £160m emergency response package to complement the financial measures already announced by the Government and to ensure immediate resilience of this vital sector.

This package includes £140 million of support for artistic organisations including regional theatres, and £20 million for individuals, including self-employed theatre practitioners, so they can better sustain themselves, and their work, in the coming months. More than 9000 individuals and organisations have been successful in applying for this emergency funding.

The Secretary of State, myself and officials continue to consult the arts sectors extensively to ensure we fully understand the impacts of Covid-19 and remain well placed to respond as the landscape develops. On the basis of that engagement, DCMS and ACE are continuing to work closely to consider the additional measures that are needed to ensure the long-term recovery and growth of the cultural sector, including regional theatres and theatre practitioners.

■ Social Media: Bullying

Jim Shannon:

[62434]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of social media platforms on protecting vulnerable people with anxiety caused by online bullying when using social media platforms.

Caroline Dinéage:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings with social media platforms on a range of issues, including online bullying and protecting vulnerable people. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the GOV.UK website.

■ Social Media: Bullying and Harassment

Royston Smith:

[\[62520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to help ensure that people with Down's Syndrome are able to use social media platforms without fear of bullying or harassment.

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.

■ Swimming Pools: Coronavirus

Ben Everitt:

[\[63536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to enable the re-opening of swimming pools as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased; and if he will estimate the date on which swimming pools may re-open.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

The Government is committed to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so including indoor gyms and sports centres. The Sport Working Group, led by myself, feeds into the Secretary of State's Cultural Renewal Taskforce and ensures strong sector and expert support for the co-development of guidelines and will help leisure facilities become Covid-secure and re-open as early as possible in July.

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.

Catherine West:

[\[64270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the scientific advice the Government received to support the decision not to reopen swimming pools.

Nigel Huddleston:

The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by understanding the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities.

We recognise the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

The Government is actively working towards a safe way to re-open these facilities, with supporting guidance.

Catherine West:

[\[64271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with representatives from the swimming sector (a) ahead of and (b) following the decision not to allow swimming pools to reopen in the next phase of the easing of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by understanding the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities.

We recognise the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

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

The Government is actively working towards a safe way to re-open these facilities, with supporting guidance.

Catherine West:

[\[64272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the continued closure of swimming pools during the covid-19 outbreak on people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Catherine West:

[\[64273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the continued closure of swimming pools on swimming pool operators.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy both mentally and physically. We are holding regular discussions with representatives from the leisure sector and national sports organisations including swimming to develop guidance that will support them to open their facilities in a timely and safe manner once lockdown measures are eased.

The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by understanding the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

Alex Sobel:

[\[64312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what scientific advice the Government has received on the need for the continued closure of swimming pools during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by understanding the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities.

We recognise the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

The Government is actively working towards a safe way to re-open these facilities, with supporting guidance.

■ **Tourism: Coronavirus**

Sir Edward Davey: [\[63214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on tourism to London; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the COVID-19 crisis has significantly impacted tourism across the UK, including in London. Both DCMS and VisitEngland remain in regular contact with tourism stakeholders and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) to closely monitor the situation and to assess the economic effects in all regions of the UK. We also appreciate the importance of inbound tourism to London; we recognise that the current travel restrictions present difficulties for the sector.

In addition, the Government and the Mayor of London recently established the London Transition Board to discuss how the capital is responding to COVID-related challenges.

The Chancellor has announced a host of measures to support businesses and individuals through the crisis, including those in the tourism sector. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Bounce Back Loans scheme.

Through VisitEngland, we announced a £1.3 million scheme to provide financial support to DMOs at risk of closure due to COVID-19. The DMO Resilience Fund has supported a number of DMOs in the South East, including Visit Greenwich, enabling them to continue their vital business support work.

From 4 July, people will be allowed to enjoy holidays in England. To help tourism businesses in the capital prepare, we have published reopening guidance on Gov.uk for the visitor economy as well as hotels and other guest accommodation. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support tourism's recovery across the UK.

■ **Travellers**

Martyn Day: [\[62524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the effect of the Channel 4 documentary entitled, Dispatches: The Truth about Traveller Crime, on relations between traveller and non traveller communities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr John Whittingdale:

I have not discussed this matter with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Like all other broadcasters, Channel 4 is editorially independent from the government, and is subject to independent regulation by Ofcom.

■ Twitter: Hate Crime

Royston Smith:

[[62519](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of Twitter on moderating hate speech towards people with Down's Syndrome.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with Twitter on a range of issues, including hate speech. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the GOV.UK website.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[[63413](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish a covid-19 recovery strategy for voluntary and community sector organisations.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has published its Covid-19 Recovery Strategy and its phased approach to easing lockdown restrictions. The Roadmap is a three-step timetable of policy measures, for lifting restrictions. It will seek to do so in as limited and targeted a way as possible, including reacting by re-imposing restrictions in specific geographic areas or in limited sectors where most proportionate.

DCMS is working with the civil society sector on potential recovery scenarios and will continue to assess the needs of the sector and how we can best support it. A number of task forces are being established to work closely with stakeholders in different sectors to develop ways in which they can make these businesses and public places COVID-19 Secure. DCMS is working to ensure that charities and social enterprises interests are represented in the cross-government process to recovery, including the relevant task forces.

EDUCATION

■ Boarding Schools

Mr Steve Baker:

[[63321](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to ensure state boarding resumes in September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

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 are working to bring all children and young people, including those at boarding schools, back into education in September.

■ Boarding Schools: Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker: [\[63322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the boarding fee income forgone by individual state boarding schools during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[63323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on state boarding schools' finances of lost boarding fees as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[63324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to provide financial assistance to state boarding schools who have lost boarding fees to support them through the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Many boarding schools have been impacted by loss of income from a range of sources including boarding fees, catering and sports facilities. While these schools have, in some cases, been able to benefit from schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, in line with guidance on the GOV.UK website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>), many have still been left facing financial challenges.

The Department continues its work to monitor and support the financial health of the whole education sector and the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is a crucial part of that.

The Department supports academy trusts facing financial difficulties through the existing framework for financial support (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-support-for-academy-trusts-in-financial-difficulty>), which enables academies to approach the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for additional financial support.

A temporary measure has also been agreed that enables academy trusts to apply to the ESFA to use their general unrestricted reserves to support boarding provision in response to these circumstances.

In the case of maintained schools, schools should discuss with their local authority to make sure their use of unrestricted reserves complies with the local authority's accounting requirements.

■ Children: Day Care

Dan Jarvis:

[64192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to private childcare providers who have experienced a loss of income due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

I would like to extend my thanks to the childcare sector for everything they have done to enable critical workers to do their essential jobs, and to continue to care for children who are vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak. Since 1 June, early years providers have been able to open to children of all ages.

The government wants to support nurseries, pre-schools and childminders during what must continue to be a worrying and uncertain time.

We will continue to pay local authorities their regular instalments of Dedicated Schools Grant, including the early years block, as usual. We expect local authorities to follow the Department for Education's position and, in general, continue paying all childminders, schools and nurseries, for the early years entitlements.

A package of support is available for individuals and businesses and will benefit many childcare providers, including a business rates holiday, business interruption loans, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and help for the self-employed. Details of support for childcare providers is available here:

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

We are continuing to work with the early years sector to understand how the sector can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available for children now, and in the longer term.

■ Children: Discrimination

Afzal Khan:

[61790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure child are not discriminated against at school for the hair colour or style they choose.

Afzal Khan:

[61791]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department provides on the creation of school uniform policies to ensure they are not discriminatory against any ethnic group.

Nick Gibb:

In formulating its school uniform policy, a school must consider its obligations not to discriminate unlawfully under equality law.

The Department provides guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act. The guidance makes clear to

schools that decisions related to appearance, including on hair, must be made in accordance with their responsibilities under the Equality Act.

Our guidance on school uniform also advises schools to take on board the views of parents and pupils, and states that policies should be flexible enough to accommodate the different needs of students.

In making decisions about its school uniform policy, and all other policies, a school must have regard to its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The school uniform guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>

The Equality Act guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

■ Children: Health

Rosie Cooper:

[64115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of school closures on children's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Education is working closely with educational institutions, sector organisations, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) to understand the effects of the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of children and identify the children and young people that need help and will continue to do so as more pupils return to school.

There are well established links between physical activity, improved mental wellbeing and educational attainment and we recognise the importance that children continue to remain fit and active, wherever possible, and have the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officers. We are encouraging schools to prioritise physical activity as they welcome more children back to school. Schools are free to organise and deliver a physical education curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils whilst following COVID-19 government guidelines.

The return to school is a key part of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, as in addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity, attendance at school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return. Children in Reception, year 1 and year 6 are now able to return to primary, and year 10 and year 12 pupils are able to receive face-to-face support at secondary. Primaries with capacity can bring back additional groups, in line with existing protective measures, and we have given schools the flexibility to have face-to-face 'check-ups' with all pupils during the summer term, which will ensure more

children and young people are able to achieve this benefit. Our intention is for all children to return to school from September and guidance will be published soon.

We are working with the DHSC to put in place further specific support for school staff to understand the issues that pupils will face with their mental wellbeing. This includes training for teachers, such as a new module developed with clinical experts on how to teach about mental health in health education and more information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS services remain open, and leading mental health charities are being supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. During Mental Health Awareness Week, the government also announced that a further £4.2 million will be awarded to mental health charities – including the Samaritans, Young Minds, and Bipolar UK.

All NHS mental health trusts have been asked to ensure that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. These are available for children and young people as well as adults. PHE 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, which is available here:

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

In addition, 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/>.

■ Countryside: Education

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[63193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of teaching the Countryside Code in school.

Nick Gibb:

Maintained schools are required to teach the national curriculum as part of their wider school curriculum. Details of the national curriculum subjects and content of programmes of study for each can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum.

Academies are not required to follow the national curriculum, though they are expected to teach a curriculum that is similar in breadth and ambition, and are required by their funding agreements to teach English, mathematics, science and religious education.

While it is not a prescribed topic in the national curriculum, all state-funded schools have the flexibility within their school curriculum to teach about the Countryside Code if they choose to do so.

■ **Education: Coronavirus**

Mr Clive Betts: [\[63225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has any plans to assess the effect of differing levels of access to digital technology on pupils' access to education during the school closure period.

Mr Clive Betts: [\[63226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to address barriers to access to online education for disadvantaged primary school children.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is providing over 200,000 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. In May, the Department invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers.

Earlier this month, the Department started inviting academy trusts and local authorities to order their devices for disadvantaged year 10 pupils.

For those in rural areas or without a connection, schools will be able to draw on support from the BBC, which is broadcasting lessons on television via the red button, and may choose to draw on the many resources offers which have been made by publishers across the country. The Department's remote education guidance includes examples of how schools can support pupils without internet access by, for example, providing physical work packs.

Grahame Morris: [\[64155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report entitled Rapid evidence assessment examining the potential impact of school closures on the attainment gap, published on 2 June 2020 by the Education Endowment Foundation, what steps he is taking to mitigate any attainment gap among students due to school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Grahame Morris: [\[64156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report entitled Rapid evidence assessment examining the potential impact of school closures on the

attainment gap, published on 2 June 2020 by the Education Endowment Foundation, whether his Department plans to offer additional home-learning resources to disadvantaged families to mitigate any attainment gap following school closures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

As plans continue for a full return to education from September, we have announced a £1 billion COVID-19 'catch-up' package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time.

£650 million will be provided to schools over the 2020-21 academic year. This one-off grant to support pupils recognises that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of their income or background.

Whilst school leaders will decide how it is used, the intention is that this money will be spent on the most effective interventions. On 19 June, the Education Endowment Foundation published a guide to help school leaders and staff decide how to use this universal funding to best support their pupils:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Covid-19_support_guide_for_schools.pdf.

In addition, a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people. This will help to accelerate their academic progress and tackle the attainment gap between them and their peers.

This £1 billion package is on top of the £14.4 billion three-year funding increase announced last year – recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help pupils to catch up. Schools continue to receive pupil premium, worth £2.4 billion this year, to help them support their disadvantaged pupils.

Our commitment of over £100 million to support remote education and social care is providing laptops and tablets to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examination in Year 10 and those receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children, and care leavers. Where these pupils do not have internet connections, we are providing 4G wireless routers so that they can learn at home. Over 200,000 laptops and tablets have been ordered. We started deliveries to local authorities and academy trusts in May and these deliveries are continuing throughout June. To date, we have shipped over 150,000 devices.

■ **Extracurricular Activities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[64247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's timescale is for issuing guidance on the re-opening of (a) out of school and (b) holiday clubs as the covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Vicky Ford:

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has confirmed, holiday clubs and out-of-school clubs for children will be able to restart over the summer, with safety measures in place. Adjustments to current measures for these clubs will be part of step 3 of the recovery strategy from 4 July. We will be providing guidance for the sector on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely as soon as possible, and guidance for parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to send their children to these clubs.

■ **Foreign Students: Coronavirus**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[62652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to (a) support international students studying in the UK during the covid-19 pandemic and (b) make an assessment of the potential merits of (i) requesting providers to waive third-term tuition fees for those students and (ii) extending Tier 4 visas for those students.

Michelle Donelan:

The department has been working closely with the higher education (HE) sector to ensure it provides essential support for international students who have decided to remain in the UK or have been unable to travel home due to COVID-19. Universities have an obligation to ensure that students have continued accommodation and access to essential services in the UK for the duration of their stay.

We are pleased to see that the sector is making every effort to enable students to continue their studies – including moving learning online either in the UK or in a student's home country – so that their teaching and assessment can proceed, and that universities are offering a range of support to students, including support for catering and cleaning.

The government also recognises that many students are facing, or will face, additional mental health challenges caused by the global outbreak. Many HE providers are bolstering their existing mental health services and adapting delivery to means other than face-to-face. Providers have responded quickly to transform mental health and wellbeing services, showing resourcefulness, and there are many examples of good practice.

The government has worked closely with the Office for Students (OfS) to help clarify that providers in England can draw upon existing student premium funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19 and international students qualify for this. Providers are able to use the funding – worth around £23 million per month for April, May, June and July – towards student hardship funds, including mental health support.

In addition, the OfS recently announced the Student Space platform, which seeks to bridge gaps in mental health support for students arising from this unprecedented situation. Funded with up to £3 million by the OfS and led by Student Minds, it is designed to work alongside existing mental health services.

Universities are autonomous and responsible for setting their own fees. In deciding to keep charging full fees, universities will of course want to ensure that they can continue to deliver courses which are fit for purpose and help students progress their qualifications. Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the provider and student.

The government is applying discretion under the current circumstances to ensure international students are not negatively impacted if they find themselves in a position where they cannot comply with certain visa rules. On 16 June, the Home Office updated their visa guidance to provide greater certainty for international HE students in the UK impacted by COVID-19; this guidance includes the latest information for those who might have questions around visa expiry, switching visa category within the UK and distance learning. It also provides reassurances regarding distance learning, confirming that students will be permitted to study partially online for the 2020/21 academic year, provided they transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow, and that those studying by distance/blended learning will be eligible to apply for the graduate route provided they are in the UK by 6 April 2021 (and meet other requirements of the route).

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[60716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if children who become eligible for free school meals during the school summer holiday period will be able to claim the national school food voucher or alternative from their school.

Vicky Ford:

Our latest guidance on free school meals is set out below:

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

Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, the government understands that children and parents face an entirely unprecedented situation over the summer. To reflect this, we will be providing additional funding for a Covid Summer Food Fund which will enable families with children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the six-week holiday period.

Our guidance on the Covid Summer Food Fund is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund>.

Through the Covid Summer Food Fund, schools can support eligible pupils with a £90 voucher to cover the six-week holiday period. Schools must order the vouchers at least one week before their school term ends. If a school receives a claim for an eligible child during the final week before the school's summer holidays, it will be possible for the school to place an exceptional order for that child via our supplier Edenred. The completion of orders by the end of term reflects the fact that school staff will break for the summer.

The government has made significant wider support available for children and families at this time. On 10 June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirmed an additional £63 million to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. In addition, the government has introduced an uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by around £1,000 a year for the next 12 months as part of an injection of over £6.5 billion by government into the welfare system.

Additional support has been pledged by various departments across government with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announcing the provision of £16 million for food support through charities, including FareShare and WRAP. DEFRA have also issued 2 million food packages to those who are shielding.

Hilary Benn:

[63231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons Windmill and Low Road primary schools in Leeds have been unable to access the free school meal voucher scheme run by Edenred.

Vicky Ford:

Windmill Primary School and Low Road Primary School have been issued with an activation email from Edenred and user accounts have been created for both schools to order the free school meal vouchers. Using data held by the department, school administrators have been sent a welcome email with details on how to access and activate the school's account. The welcome email was sent between 31 March and 2 April 2020.

On 19 June both schools asked for their contact emails to be updated and, once verified by the department, they will receive new activation links.

The status of Windmill and Low Road Primary Schools' account can be checked online using the Edenred public portal. It also includes guidance on how to proceed if schools are experiencing technical problems with accessing their accounts:

<https://edenreduk.secure.force.com/publicportal/>.

Schools who are experiencing technical difficulties with Edenred can contact them directly via the dedicated helpline (0333 400 5932) or an email address (freeschoolmeals@edenred.com) set up specifically for schools participating in the national voucher scheme.

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy:

[64297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, is he will include specific advice on the importance of good indoor ventilation in the document, Guidance Higher education: reopening buildings and campuses.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education providers are autonomous institutions and we expect them to make their own judgements based on the latest public health guidance. We published guidance on 3 June on the reopening of buildings and campuses to help providers make informed decisions about their provision in ways that protect the health and wellbeing of both staff and students. Our guidance contains links to other sources of relevant advice, including to the guidance on safer workplaces:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>, including references to the importance of ventilation, particularly in advance of reopening buildings.

History: Education

Afzal Khan: [61785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Departments will revise the national curriculum to consider Black British history and the history of racism and discrimination in the British empire.

Afzal Khan: [61786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what books by non-white authors are currently required reading on the (a) primary and (b) secondary school curriculum.

Afzal Khan: [61788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that textbooks used in the national curricula are (a) race conscious and (b) inclusive.

Afzal Khan: [61789]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the extent and value of teaching of Black and minority ethnic experience in the national curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

Racism in all its forms is abhorrent and has no place in our society. Schools play a significant role in teaching children about the importance of having respect and tolerance for all cultures. The Department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity and supports all students to tackle racism and have the knowledge and tools to do so.

The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the Department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The Department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their students, and to make choices about what they teach and the resources they use, this also includes textbooks. The development and content of textbooks is a matter for individual publishers rather than

the Department. The Department has not made an assessment of the impact of the National Curriculum on any specific group.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, students should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experiences of Black and minority ethnic people. The flexibility within the history curriculum means that there is the opportunity for teachers to teach about Black and minority ethnic history across the spectrum of themes and eras set out in the curriculum.

There is scope to include Black and minority ethnic history and experience in other curriculums, such as in:

- Citizenship: At Key Stage 4, students should be taught about the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- PSHE: Schools have flexibility to teach topics such as Black history as part of their Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) programme and through the introduction of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education students will be taught the importance of respectful relationships in particular how stereotypes, based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.

■ Literacy: Teaching Methods

Olivia Blake:

[\[63553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons Ofsted's draft Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework and Handbook, published as part of his Department's consultation on that document, bans the use of competing approaches in early reading teaching; and for what reasons Ofsted changed its position in the Initial Teacher Training Core Content Framework which only mandated the use of systematic synthetic phonics to teach decoding in early reading.

Nick Gibb:

There is sound evidence that systematic phonics is a highly effective method for teaching early reading. The evidence indicates that the teaching of phonics is most effective when combined with a language-rich curriculum to develop children's positive attitudes towards literacy.

The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework was published by the Department in November 2019 and is mandatory from September 2020. It makes clear that, in line with the Teachers' Standards (2011), it is essential for all teachers of early reading to have a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics.

Ofsted are responsible for inspecting ITT provision and between 27 January and 4 April they held a public consultation on proposals related to their new Initial Teacher Education Inspection Handbook. The new handbook sets out how ITT provision will be inspected and was published on 24 June 2020 alongside Ofsted's consultation

response. For primary and secondary phases, ITT providers must ensure that their curricula provide the minimum entitlement to training as outlined in the ITT Core Content Framework.

England achieved its highest ever score in reading in 2016, moving from joint 10th to joint 8th in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) rankings. This follows a greater focus on reading in the primary curriculum, and a particular focus on phonics. These are the first international assessment results from a cohort of pupils who have experienced changes in primary curriculum and assessment introduced since the 2010 election.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Andrew Gwynne:

[64105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for local authorities to cover additional costs incurred to ensure that early years settings can re-open safely as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Vicky Ford:

We have worked closely and have regular conversations with the HM Treasury on support for nurseries, pre-schools and childminders during what must be a worrying and uncertain time.

On 17 March, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, confirmed the government will continue to pay funding to local authorities for the free entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds, providing reassurance for early years settings in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

A package of support is available for individuals and businesses which will benefit childcare providers, including a business rates holiday, business interruption loans, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and help for the self-employed. Details of support available for childcare providers are available here:

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

On 24 May 2020, we published a planning guide for early years and childcare settings. The guidance sets out considerations for settings as they prepared to open to more children and the protective measures to put in place to limit the transmission of COVID-19. It was developed in consultation with early years sector bodies and providers from a variety of different settings and is available here:

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

We are continuing to work with the sector to understand how the early years sector can best be supported to ensure that sufficient safe, appropriate and affordable childcare is available for those returning to work now, and for all families who need it in the longer term.

■ Primary Education: Sports

Dame Diana Johnson: [61684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for the future of the Primary PE & Sport Premium funding; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government will confirm arrangements for the Primary PE and Sport Premium in the 2020-21 academic year as soon as possible. The position for the 2021-22 academic year and beyond will be considered at the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Pupils: Computers

Emma Hardy: [64301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many laptops have been provided to pupils in Hull west and Hessle constituency due to school closures during the covid-19 outbreak to date.

Nick Gibb:

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

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

The Department has ordered over 200,000 laptops and tablets and allocated devices to local authorities and academy trusts based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have access to a device. Local authorities and academy trusts are best placed to identify and prioritise children and young people who need devices. The Department is working to provide these devices in the shortest possible timeframe; deliveries to schools and Local Authorities began in May and is continuing throughout June.

The Department has published information about how many laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers we have delivered or dispatched to local authorities and academy trusts as of 14 June, which can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laptops-tablets-and-4g-wireless-routers-progress-data>.

This includes 1,415 devices to Hull City Council for children with a social worker and care leavers. For East Riding of Yorkshire Council, a total of 828 devices have been delivered: 625 for children with a social worker and care leavers, and 203 for disadvantaged Year 10 pupils.

■ Racial Discrimination: Education

Afzal Khan:

[\[61787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what resources are available to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools to teach anti-racism.

Nick Gibb:

We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. Schools are required to actively promote fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faith and beliefs.

From September 2020, Relationships Education will become compulsory for primary-aged pupils and Relationships and Sex Education will become compulsory for secondary-aged pupils. Statutory guidance for these subjects requires all primary-aged pupils to be taught the importance of respecting others, even when they are different from them, or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. Pupils will also be taught what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. This will be reinforced at secondary school when pupils will also learn about legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality (particularly with reference to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and that everyone is unique and equal.

Schools can also choose to teach a range of subjects related to racism at primary, following the non-statutory framework for Citizenship. Pupils can be taught to identify and respect the differences between people; the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviour, including racism, on individuals; and how to respond to them and ask for help. The National Curriculum for Citizenship at secondary phase enables pupils to develop their understanding of the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding. There is also flexibility within the history curriculum for teachers to teach about Black and minority ethnic history across the spectrum of themes and eras, to support an understanding of the active role Black and minority ethnic people have played in history.

The Department does not specify how schools should teach curriculum subjects. Schools have the freedom to use their professional judgements and an understanding of their pupils to develop the right approach for their schools. This includes decisions about which resources they may choose to support their teaching. The Department is developing training materials to support schools' implementation of Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education. This will include training modules, implementation guidance, support to access resources and case studies. Schools who require more support will be able to access training through existing regional teaching school networks.

■ Schools: Buildings

Stephen Morgan: [\[61769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming area guidelines for schools that prevent lessons being taught in settings other than classrooms.

Stephen Morgan: [\[61770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of trades unions on his Department's area guidelines for mainstream schools, building bulletin 103, in relation to where lessons can be taught.

Stephen Morgan: [\[61771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of his Department's area guidelines for mainstream schools, building bulletin 103 on where lessons can be taught to pupils on the educational wellbeing of pupils following the outbreak of covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The design and construction standards for new school buildings are under regular review to reflect any changes in regulations or best practice nationally. There are no plans at present to review Building Bulletin 103.

■ Schools: Bullying

Afzal Khan: [\[61793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department provides to schools on handling (i) incidents and (ii) sustained cases of (a) racist, (b) xenophobic, (c) Islamophobic and (d) antisemitic bullying.

Vicky Ford:

The government is clear that all bullying is unacceptable and should be tackled by schools. The department issues guidance to schools on how to prevent and respond to bullying as part of their statutory behaviour policy.

It sets out that bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. The guidance is clear that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence. It sets out that if school staff feel that, during an incident, an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

The guidance also directs schools to organisations who can provide support with tackling bullying related to race, religion and nationality. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>.

On 7 June, we announced more than £750,000 for the Diana Award, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Anne Frank Trust. This is to help hundreds of schools and colleges build relationships between pupils, boost their resilience, and continue to tackle

bullying both in person and online. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-mental-health-support-for-pupils-and-teachers>.

The department has also made resources available through the Educate Against Hate website. This website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs. The website is available here:

<https://educateagainsthate.com/>.

In November 2018 we published Respectful School Communities, a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline. This can combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind and is available here: <https://educateagainsthate.com/school-leaders/?filter=guidance-and-training-school-leaders>.

From September 2020, relationships education will be compulsory for all primary aged pupils, relationships and sex education will be compulsory for all secondary aged pupils and health education will be compulsory in all state-funded schools in England. Under the content for respectful relationships, the guidance sets out that pupils should know about the different types of bullying, the impact it has, the responsibility of bystanders and how to get help, and it is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/>.

■ Schools: Clothing

Layla Moran:

[64306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many local authorities offer a school clothing grant.

Nick Gibb:

In England, some local authorities provide discretionary grants to help with buying school uniforms. The local authorities which offer these grants set their own criteria for eligibility. The Department does not collect figures on the number of local authorities that offer uniform grants. In addition, schools may also offer individual clothing schemes, such as offering secondhand uniform at reduced prices; this would be a decision for the school to make.

No school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling unable to apply to, or attend, a school of their choice, due to the cost of the uniform. As such the Department supports the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Private Members' Bill, to make our guidance regarding the cost considerations for school uniform statutory.

The Department's current non-statutory guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>.

Schools: Coronavirus

Apsana Begum: [\[61823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of potential effect of the decision to reopen schools following the covid-19 lockdown on the number of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools reported by Public Health England on 18 June 2020 in its Weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report; and if he will place a copy of that assessment in the Library.

Nick Gibb:

In its weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report, Public Health England (PHE) provides information on the number of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools. The Department continues to engage with PHE and other organisations to ensure our guidance reflects the most up to date scientific advice.

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. Children returning to educational and childcare settings in greater numbers will also allow more families to return to work.

In all schools and nurseries, preventing the spread of COVID-19 involves dealing with direct and indirect transmission. Our guidance sets out a range of approaches and actions to do this. These can be seen as a hierarchy of controls that, when implemented, creates an inherently safer system, where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

Apsana Begum: [\[61824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of the number of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools as reported by Public Health England in its Weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report on 18 June 2020 included people from BAME backgrounds.

Nick Gibb:

In its weekly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) surveillance report, Public Health England provides information on the number of acute respiratory outbreaks in schools. They do not have detail on the proportion of this number who are from BAME backgrounds.

Rachael Maskell: [\[63420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether additional spaces required by schools for physical classroom capacity due to the covid-19 outbreak will be funded by his Department or by schools.

Vicky Ford:

We have published guidance on the additional funding we are providing to schools to cover unavoidable costs incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak that cannot be met from their existing resources. The funding is targeted towards the costs we have

identified as the biggest barrier to schools operating as they need to at this challenging time.

The cost categories covered by the fund include the increased premises-related costs of opening over school holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not in school, where schools are not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs relating to cases or suspected cases of COVID-19, above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements. The guidance is available at:

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

Each school's circumstances will be different. Any school that cannot achieve the small group sizes set out in the protective measures guidance for the current phase of wider opening should discuss options with their local authority or academy trust. If necessary, schools have the flexibility this term to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then, to support children's early learning, schools should prioritise groups of children this term as follows:

- infant schools – nursery (where applicable) and Reception; and
- primary schools – nursery (where applicable), Reception and Year 1.

The guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>.

Where primary schools have capacity, they may choose to welcome back additional pupils in groups of 15, alongside eligible year groups and priority groups, if they do not require additional funding, staff or classrooms to do so.

Simon Baynes:

[63526]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure schools provide casual directly employed workers with the same level of financial support as casual agency workers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Supply staff who are directly employed by schools, including supply staff employed on a casual basis, are able to receive financial support during the COVID-19 outbreak at the same level as casually employed agency staff.

We expect schools to ensure any employees funded by public money continue to be paid from their existing staff budgets, and not to furlough staff, in line with the HMRC guidance to public sector organisations: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

The support available for casual directly employed staff is outlined in the 'actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak' guidance:

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

[schools-about-temporarily-closing#should-schools-continue-to-pay-contingent-workers-that-they-directly-employ-on-a-zero-hours-or-casual-basis.](#)

■ **Schools: Racial Discrimination**

Afzal Khan: [61792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on the handling of complaints against schools accused of racism.

Nick Gibb:

All schools in England must have and publish a complaints policy. The Department expects them to be given the first opportunity to respond to complaints, including those involving racism. If complainants are still unhappy once the local procedure is complete, they may either choose to complain direct to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, or they can ask the Secretary of State to consider the school's handling of the complaint, under his powers of intervention. These are set out under Sections 496/497 of the Education Act 1996, if the school is maintained by the local authority or, under the terms of its Funding Agreement, if the school is an Academy or Free School. The Department considers complaints about schools on an individual basis, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Afzal Khan: [61794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment has his Department made of the effect of racism in English secondary schools on the attainment gap between BAME and white children.

Nick Gibb:

The Department believes that racism in all its forms is abhorrent and has no place in our society. Schools play a significant role in supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and preparing them for life in modern Britain.

All children and young people must be treated fairly. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil in a number of respects because of a characteristic protected by the Act, including race. The Public Sector Equality Duty also requires public bodies, including maintained schools and academies, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations across all characteristics.

On Black, Asian and minority ethnic children's attainment, in 2015 the Department published the following research report:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439861/RR439A-Ethnic minorities and attainment the effects of poverty.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439861/RR439A-Ethnic_minorities_and_attainment_the_effects_of_poverty.pdf).

Our research report on understanding Key Stage 4 attainment and progress (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748514/Understanding_KS4_LSYPE2_research-report.pdf), published

in October 2018, also includes content on the relationship between ethnicity and attainment, noting that this is complex and highly varied. There is also further information on education, skills and training on the Government's ethnicity facts and figures website: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training>.

Afzal Khan:

[61795]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department make an assessment of the potential merits of the recommendations contained in the report entitled, Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools, published by Dr Remi Joseph-Salisbury and the Runnymede Trust; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Officials at the Department are aware of the recent report on 'Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools' published by the Runnymede Trust and continue to consider its implications. They have noted the report's recommendations across the teacher workforce, curriculums, police and policies.

On the teacher workforce, in October 2018, the Department set out its commitment to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce across all protected characteristics - including race - when it launched the Statement of Intent. This commitment to increasing teacher diversity was made alongside 10 co-signatories from the sector (including unions and grassroots organisations, such as BAMEed, WomenEd, LGBTed and Disability Ed) who set out their own individual activities. The Department has been making progress against its commitments including:

- Providing £2 million of funding in nationwide Equality and Diversity regional 'hubs' to support aspiring leaders, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, into headship;
- Reflecting the importance of diversity in the Department's Recruitment and Retention Strategy published in January 2019;
- Continuing to engage with our signatories. In July 2019, we held a roundtable to gather progress updates and showcase best practice;
- Encouraging representative recruitment for NPQs for school leadership through key performance indicators.

On curricula, schools play an important role in preparing children for life in modern Britain and supporting them to understand the society they grow up in. All schools are required to teach a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. The national curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The Department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach. Additionally, schools are required to promote

fundamental British values, including individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

On the presence of police in schools, there are good examples of joint working between police forces and schools which have been established through working effectively in partnership. Indeed, many schools have links with their local police forces and police officers play an important role in schools, engaging with and mentoring pupils. However, decisions about these relationships are rightly made at a local level between schools who know their pupils and police forces who know their local neighbourhoods.

On school policies to tackle racism, all children and young people must be treated fairly. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil in a number of respects because of a characteristic protected by the Act, including race. The Public Sector Equality Duty also requires public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations across all characteristics. Additionally, the Department is clear that racism or bullying of any kind is completely unacceptable and schools should adhere to stringent behaviour policies to prevent this.

■ **Students: Coronavirus**

Derek Twigg: [\[61669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to provide additional funding to support (a) students at Riverside College, Halton and (b) other students affected by the closure of colleges as a result of the covid-19 outbreak to catch-up on their studies.

Nick Gibb:

We are committed to supporting all children and young people to make up for time spent out of education. We're giving colleges the flexibility to offer a combination of face-to-face and online delivery to more of their students and apprentices and we know that remote education has been working well for many students in post-16 education.

We will continue to work with the sector to establish the best methods of supporting students to make up for disruption due to COVID-19.

Munira Wilson: [\[63510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department plans to provide to schools on prioritising student wellbeing (a) during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) as lockdown restrictions are eased.

Vicky Ford:

The government remains committed to promoting and supporting the mental health of children and young people.

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 is a key part of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, as attendance at school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are now able to return to primary, and Year 10 and Year 12 pupils are able to receive face-to-face support at secondary. Primaries with capacity can bring back additional groups, in line with existing protective measures, and we have given schools the flexibility to have face-to-face 'check-ups' with all pupils during the summer term. Our intention is for all children to return to school from September and guidance will be published soon.

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

Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS services remain open, and leading mental health charities are being supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. During Mental Health Awareness Week, the government also announced that a further £4.2 million will be awarded to mental health charities, including the Samaritans, Young Minds, and Bipolar UK.

All NHS mental health trusts have been asked to ensure that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. These are available for children and young people as well as adults. 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, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

In addition, 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/>.

■ Teachers: Equality

Afzal Khan: [\[61777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase representation of ethnic minorities in the teaching workforce.

Afzal Khan: [\[61779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce.

Afzal Khan: [\[61780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress his Department has made on increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce since the publication of its Statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce on 11 October 2018.

Nick Gibb:

In October 2018, the Department set out its commitment to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce across all protected characteristics - including race - when it launched the Statement of Intent. This commitment to increasing teacher diversity was made alongside ten co-signatories from the sector (including unions and grassroots organisations, such as BAMEed, WomenEd, LGBTed and Disability Ed) who set out their own individual activities.

The Department has been making progress against its commitments including:

- Providing £2 million of funding in nationwide Equality and Diversity regional 'hubs' to support aspiring leaders, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, into headship;
- Reflecting the importance of diversity in the Department's Recruitment and Retention Strategy published in January 2019;
- Continuing to engage with our signatories. In July 2019, we held a roundtable to gather progress updates and showcase best practice;
- Encouraging representative recruitment for National Professional Qualifications for school leadership through key performance indicators.

Afzal Khan: [\[61782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government has taken to increase the diversity of (a) heads and (b) deputy heads in state-funded secondary schools in England.

Nick Gibb:

In October 2018, the Department set out its commitment to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce when it launched the Statement of Intent.

The Department has been making progress against the activities it committed to in the statement, including:

- Providing £2 million of funding to nationwide Equality and Diversity regional ‘hubs’ to support aspiring leaders, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, into headship.
- Reflecting the importance of diversity in the Department’s Recruitment and Retention Strategy published in January 2019.
- Encouraging representative recruitment for National Professional Qualifications for school leadership through key performance indicators.

Between 2014 and 2018, over 2,900 teachers have been helped to take the next steps in their career through school-led diversity leadership training because of Equality and Diversity funding.

■ Teachers: Racial Discrimination

Afzal Khan: [\[61783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what training his Department requires of (a) prospective teachers and (b) teachers on anti-racism and racial literacy.

Afzal Khan: [\[61784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what anti-racism training his Department provides as part of teacher’s continued professional development.

Nick Gibb:

The new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework sets out a core minimum entitlement for all trainees of what should be covered during their teacher training. The Government does not prescribe the curriculum of ITT courses, it remains for individual providers to design courses that are appropriate to the needs of trainees and for the subject, phase and age range that the trainees will be teaching.

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) will continue to be awarded at the end of ITT against the Teachers’ Standards (2011). The Standards set out the key elements of effective teaching and the minimum expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers. In order to be awarded QTS, trainees must demonstrate that they satisfy all of the Teaching Standards at the appropriate level, including the requirement that they have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils and set goals that stretch and challenge young people of all backgrounds and abilities.

High-quality professional development is important for teachers at all stages of their careers to ensure they receive appropriate support and to enable them constantly to improve their practice. Decisions relating to teachers’ professional development rests with schools, headteachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements. While teachers and headteachers are responsible for their own professional development, we recognise that it is of vital importance teachers are sensitive to issues of race and discrimination at all times. Teachers are required to always meet the Teachers’ Standards and their training and development should support them to do this. Part two of the Standards refer to ‘Personal and

Professional Conduct’ and includes the requirement to always show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.

■ **Universities: Coronavirus**

Owen Thompson: [\[63441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will respond to the proposal of April 2020 from the University and College Union for the Government to urgently provide a sector-wide funding guarantee to protect universities against financial losses as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak is bringing significant financial challenges to the higher education (HE) sector and we have been working closely with the sector in England to monitor the likely impacts. Financial sustainability of providers in the devolved administrations is the responsibility of the relevant devolved government.

On 4 May 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a package of measures to ensure sustainability in HE at a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

We are pulling forward tuition fee payments, expected to be worth £2.6 billion, for providers so that they receive more cash in the first term of the 2020/21 academic year. This will have no impact on students but will allow providers to better manage financial risks over the autumn. This will be available to all providers across the UK. In reprofiling these payments, we are clear in our expectation that providers should use the cashflow benefits appropriately, taking significant steps to improve efficiencies and manage their finances in order to avoid cashflow problems in the future. Reprofiling in this way is a one-off intervention for the autumn term only, to help providers take all necessary steps now to prepare for the future.

In England, we will also be bringing forward £100 million of quality-related research funding for providers to the current academic year to help to address some of the immediate pressures faced by university research activities.

The department will consider purchasing land and buildings where they can be used for new or expanding schools and colleges in England. This will take place as part of existing programmes and using established procedures. This financial year (across purchases from all suitable vendors, including but not limited to HE providers), we have budgeted up to £100 million to acquire sites for planned projects in England.

Details are available on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-package-for-universities-and-students>.

The government has also confirmed that HE providers in England are eligible to apply for its support packages, including business loan support schemes, which the Office for Students (OfS) the regulator in England, estimates could be worth at least £700m to the sector.

We will only intervene further where we believe there is a case to do so and where we believe intervention is possible and appropriate and as a last resort.

In such instances, we will work with providers to review their circumstances and assess the need for restructuring and any attached conditions. The department will be working with HM Treasury and other government departments to develop this restructuring regime, and with the devolved administrations.

■ **Water: Safety**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [64287]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of primary school children who have been taught water safety during academic year 2019-20.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [64289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of KS3 school children who have been taught water safety during academic year 2019-20.

Nick Gibb:

Swimming and water safety are compulsory elements of the PE curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum sets out the expectation that pupils should be taught to: swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres; use a range of strokes effectively; and perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

The Department does not collect data centrally on the proportion of pupils at Key Stages 1 to 3 that have been taught swimming and water safety lessons, but all primary schools are required to publish information on the percentage of their pupils in year 6 who met each of the three swimming and water safety national curriculum requirements. Further details are available in the online reporting section of guidance on the Primary PE and Sport Premium, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools#online-reporting>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **African Swine Fever: Disease Control**

James Wild: [61815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of risk of an outbreak of African swine fever in the UK; and what steps the Government is taking to mitigate that risk through border controls.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency regularly assess the changing global animal disease presence and its potential risk to the UK. The most recent assessments for African swine fever (ASF) were published on the Gov.uk website in March 2020 (for Europe) and May 2020 (for South East Asia and Oceania). The UK remains at medium risk for the entry of contaminated or infected products. The risk of exposure to the UK pig population is highly dependent on the level of biosecurity on individual pig premises and is low.

In terms of mitigating that risk, EU safeguard measures restrict the commercial trade of pork and pork products from regions that are affected by ASF so these cannot be traded with the UK. All countries outside of the EU who are currently approved to trade in pork and pork products with the UK are free of ASF. The import of pork products from non-approved countries is illegal. Defra continues to work closely with Border Force officials to crack down on illegally imported meat and UK Border officials target and search freight, passengers and luggage at the border and will seize and destroy illegally imported meat products. A specific communications campaign about ASF was launched in summer 2019 which included a new poster campaign introduced in UK airports and ports, to raise awareness of the disease and the risks of bringing back potentially contaminated products.

■ Agriculture: Coronavirus**Darren Henry:**[\[61828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support farmers to adapt their business models during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government wants a profitable and resilient farming sector. We will always champion our farmers and growers by supporting them to produce more of our great British food and drink, providing a reliable and sustainable food supply to the British public.

At the outset of the pandemic, we introduced a number of measures to support our farming sectors through this difficult period. These included relaxing drivers' hours, temporarily relaxing certain elements of competition law and a dairy response fund to help those dairy farmers most in need of support. We have also worked closely with the dairy and horticulture sectors to address supply chain and labour issues.

We have been in close discussion with banks to ensure the farming sector has access to financial support to ease cashflow problems during this period, including through the HMG backed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan (CBIL), and the Bounce Back Loan scheme.

The Agriculture Bill provides the legislative basis for longer term transition to support investment in a more productive and sustainable farming sector.

It will allow us to introduce ambitious new land management schemes in England, based on the principle of "public money for public goods", so that we can reward

farmers and land managers who protect our environment, improve animal welfare and produce high quality food in a more sustainable way. The Bill will also help farmers to stay competitive, with measures to increase productivity and invest in new technology.

Last week, Defra and the Department for International Trade launched a package of support that will offer immediate support to help agriculture, food and drink businesses grow their trade activity overseas. This will help producers, manufacturers and agri-tech companies across the food supply chain, from farm to fork.

■ **Agriculture: Labour Market**

Nick Smith:

[\[61709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the combined effect of the UK leaving the EU and covid-19 travel restrictions on the agricultural labour market in 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

Free movement continues until the end of the Transition Period, which is the end of this year. In future, any EU citizen wishing to come to live and work in the UK will need to apply under the UK's future immigration system. Agricultural businesses will continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status. We have guaranteed the rights of all EU citizens and their families already living in the UK. The EU Settlement Scheme, which opened in March 2019, has already received more than 3.5 million applications from EU citizens who are able to stay and work in the UK and there is still over a year until the application deadline of 30 June 2021

The Seasonal Workers Pilot is providing thousands of workers to farms across the UK this year. Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have delayed the arrival of some Pilot workers. Defra and the Home Office are working closely with the operators of the Pilot to enable workers to reach the UK, including facilitating the re-opening of Visa Application Centres in Ukraine and Belarus on 1 June. This has allowed significant numbers of Pilot workers from those countries to obtain a visa and travel to the UK.

Defra has been working closely with the sector and other Government departments to closely monitor and respond to the agricultural labour market this year. Industry feedback indicates the demand for seasonal workers is currently being met, but we know this may change in the coming months and we are closely monitoring the situation.

■ **Agriculture: Seasonal Workers**

Nick Smith:

[\[61705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people have been recruited to the Pick For Britain scheme as of 19 June 2020; and whether that number has been sufficient to meet demand.

Nick Smith: [\[61706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many agricultural settings have benefited from the Pick For Britain scheme to date.

Nick Smith: [\[61708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what targets he has set for the Pick For Britain scheme; and what assessment he has made of whether those targets have been met.

Victoria Prentis:

The Pick for Britain website was launched in April as a joint Defra and industry initiative to bring together people who are looking for work on UK farms with recruiters who have roles to fill. As well as the website, we have worked across industry and with commercial partners and others to widely promote the Pick for Britain campaign. At its busiest point 27 businesses, including recruiters who worked for multiple individual horticulture businesses, were listed on the 'Jobs' page. The website has had over 1.5 million unique page views since its launch, and several recruiters and growers have now filled their vacancies for the season and have asked to be removed from the website. The campaign's benefits have been felt beyond the website, and industry have confirmed that many more businesses have benefited from the wider campaign.

We know that there is a lot of interest from domestic workers, but we are not able to share any information about specific vacancies, interviews or people in jobs as that information is commercially sensitive and held by individual companies. Defra has therefore not set a target for the total number of workers the Pick for Britain campaign aims to have directly or indirectly recruited.

We are closely monitoring the situation, and although labour supplies can change quickly industry is indicating that the demand for seasonal workers is currently being met.

Nick Smith: [\[61707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to review the effectiveness of the Pick For Britain scheme; and whether that review will include analysis of the effect of (a) the UK leaving the EU and (b) the covid-19 outbreak on that scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The Pick for Britain website was launched in April as a joint Defra and industry initiative to bring together people who are looking for work on UK farms with recruiters who have roles to fill.

We are evaluating the impact of the Pick for Britain website on an ongoing basis through engagement with the recruiters and businesses who use it. Industry feedback indicates the demand for seasonal workers is currently being met, but we know this may change in the coming months and we will continue to closely monitor the situation. Although Pick for Britain was launched in direct response to the Covid-19

outbreak we will, as part of our evaluation, consider how positive lessons from the campaign might be applied beyond the end of the Transition Period.

Nick Smith: [\[61710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimates his Department has made of the cost to the public purse of the Pick For Britain scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The Pick for Britain campaign has been a joint industry-Government initiative with co-investment from partners, which has ensured that the successful campaign has been at little direct cost to the Government. So far £16,500 has been spent by Defra on the Pick for Britain campaign and a small budget for potential future spend to the end of the season is available should this be needed.

■ **Aquariums: Coronavirus**

Alex Sobel: [\[63486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has for the reopening of aquariums as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Victoria Prentis:

Outdoor areas of aquariums have been allowed to reopen since 15 June, subject to appropriate social distancing measures being in place.

The Prime Minister announced on Tuesday 23 June that, as part of the latest round of easing of coronavirus restrictions, the indoor parts of aquariums will be allowed to reopen, with social distancing measures in place, from 4 July.

■ **Beverage Containers: Coronavirus**

Catherine West: [\[63450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government is taking steps to discourage businesses from using plastic non-reusable cups during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rebecca Pow:

In line with the waste hierarchy, the Government encourages the use of reusable cups and containers where possible to avoid waste and increase resource efficiency.

However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to follow the latest safety guidelines and only allow them where it is safe to do so. It is up to individual businesses to decide whether to allow the use of reusable cups or containers during this period. If reusable cups or containers are used, they should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water, or in a dishwasher, if suitable. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) provides further guidance in its business portal:

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19.

The FSA advises making sure staff do not touch the customer's equipment. Businesses can ask customers to leave their cups on the counter and then pour the drink into the cup from their own containers or ask staff to wash the container and their hands in hot soapy water.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[64284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will undertake a consultation on the terms of reference for the delegation of powers from the European Chemicals Agency to the Health and Safety Executive and the environment agencies in regard to (a) public participation, stakeholder engagement and transparency, (b) collaboration with other agencies and (c) whether it will include a role for the UK's public health bodies.

Rebecca Pow:

The REACH (Amendments etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 establish a UK regulatory framework and build domestic capacity to deliver the functions currently performed by the European Chemical Agency (ECHA). It is this Statutory Instrument (SI) that sets the terms of reference for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to take on ECHA's role.

As well as parliamentary scrutiny of the SI, we engaged with a range of stakeholders both before and after the Regulations were passed by Parliament. In addition, the SI itself contains a range of provisions to ensure that the UK Agency (HSE) consults publicly on its processes, decisions and opinions; develops appropriate contacts with stakeholders; acts transparently; and works collaboratively with other public bodies.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[64285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many full-time equivalent staff the Government plans to recruit to (a) the Environment Agency and (b) the Health & Safety Executive to deliver the proposed post-transition Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH); and (i) what positions that recruitment will fill and (ii) what the timescale for that recruitment is.

Rebecca Pow:

The continued effective and safe management of chemicals to safeguard human health and the environment is our overarching objective now that we have left the EU. The preparations we made for the possibility of a no deal exit mean that we are well placed to be ready with our own independent regulatory regime for 1 January 2021. This includes ensuring that both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency (EA) have the necessary capability and capacity to carry out their responsibilities. Once we have staffed up to full operating capability we expect to spend about £13 million per year on the UK's new REACH regulatory system. This figure covers the following costs:

Operation and maintenance of the REACH IT system; and staff resourcing in Defra, HSE and EA to ensure:

- the necessary levels of technical specialist input into risk and socio-economic assessment of chemicals for the UK (for example, authorising the use of and restricting chemicals as appropriate);
- high quality policy advice can be provided; and
- we can increase UK and international stakeholder engagement.

■ Clean Air Zones: Leeds

Alex Sobel:

[63484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it remains his Department's policy to provide funding for the Leeds Clean Air Zone.

Rebecca Pow:

We have provided Leeds City Council with £24.4 million for their Clean Air Zone. This includes funding to implement the zone and to help mitigate the impacts on drivers and on businesses.

■ Dogs: Imports

Sir Roger Gale:

[R] [63200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what further steps he plans to take to tackle the illegal importation of puppies into the UK.

Sir Roger Gale:

[R] [63201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the pet travel scheme, if he will (a) re-introduce (i) the rabies blood test with a wait period in line with the incubation of the disease and (ii) the requirement for dogs and cats to be treated against ticks prior to entry into the UK, (b) shorten the tapeworm treatment window, (c) reduce the number of dogs allowed into the UK at one time under non-commercial rules and (d) bring forward legislative proposals to ensure the welfare of dogs and cats during transport between mainland Europe and the UK.

Sir Roger Gale:

[R] [63202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will increase the sentences for the illegal importation of dogs and cats to include provision for a significant custodial sentence upon conviction.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra takes the issue of puppy smuggling and other illegal importation of pets seriously. It is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering to puppies and puts the health of pets and people in the UK at risk. We have legislation in place to ensure those guilty of offences are duly punished.

We are listening to the concerns of stakeholders around future requirements and the Government is developing a range of options to strengthen our efforts to tackle puppy smuggling, taking into consideration the recommendations of stakeholders such as Dogs Trust. The end of the Transition Period may open up new opportunities for

managing our own pet travel arrangements. As part of our wider work in this area, we have conducted a renewed rabies risk assessment and have commissioned assessments to understand the risks posed by tapeworms, as well as ticks and tick-borne disease. The results of these will be used to inform our future policy options.

Regarding specific sentencing options, the end of the Transition Period will again present new opportunities. We want to ensure that there are robust controls on disease and animal welfare whilst allowing pet owners to continue to be able to travel to and from the EU with the minimum of disruption.

■ Economic Growth: Environment Protection

Caroline Lucas: [\[63296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that changes to regulations and environmental protections designed to stimulate economic activity do not undermine environmental targets set out in (a) the 25-Year Environment Plan, (b) the Environment Bill, (c) the Agriculture Bill and (d) net zero legislation.

Olivia Blake: [\[63557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that policies designed to stimulate economic activity do not undermine the environmental aims of (a) the 25 Year Environment Plan, (b) the Environment Bill, (c) the Agriculture Bill, and (d) net zero legislation.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has no current plans to amend regulations and environmental protections in order to stimulate economic activity.

However, as we rebuild our economy in response to the coronavirus pandemic, we are working to deliver a fairer, greener and more resilient future. We will ramp up our world-leading work on our ambitious legislative agenda through our landmark Environment and Agricultural Bills. These bills will work hand in hand to protect and recover our precious natural environment and diverse ecosystems in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan to leave the environment in a better place than we have inherited it.

The 25 Year Environment Plan will be adopted as the first statutory Environmental Improvement Plan under the Bill. The Environment Bill also creates a power to set long-term, legally-binding environmental targets. It requires Government to set, and achieve, at least one long-term target in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and resource efficiency and waste reduction. We want them to be ambitious, credible, and supported by society. As a first step we expect to publish a Target Policy Paper over the coming months which will include further details about the target-setting process that we will be implementing.

The net zero challenge remains and we need to transform our economy over the next three decades to end our contribution to climate change. In the UK we've already

shown how to grow the economy while cutting emissions and we will continue to lead the world as we respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19 and develop our net zero strategy in advance of COP26.

Olivia Blake:

[\[63558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to change environmental (a) regulations and (b) protections in order to stimulate economic activity.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has no current plans to change environmental regulations and protections in order to stimulate economic activity.

However, as we rebuild our economy in response to the coronavirus pandemic, we are working to deliver a fairer, greener and more resilient future. We will ramp up our world-leading work on our ambitious legislative agenda through our landmark Environment and Agricultural Bills. These bills will work hand in hand to protect and recover our precious natural environment and diverse ecosystems in line with our 25 Year Environment Plan to leave the environment in a better place than we have inherited it.

The net zero challenge remains and we need to transform our economy over the next three decades to end our contribution to climate change. In the UK we have already shown how to grow the economy while cutting emissions and we will continue to lead the world as we respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19 and develop our net zero strategy in advance of COP26.

■ **Floods: Nottinghamshire**

Darren Henry:

[\[61833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on (a) reviewing and (b) mitigating the effects on communities of recent flooding in Nottinghamshire.

Rebecca Pow:

Nottinghamshire saw one of wettest Autumns on record and received almost three times the monthly average of rainfall from Storm Dennis. More recently, flooding from thunderstorms in June 2020 impacted similar locations, including Trowell and Beeston. The Environment Agency has been working closely with all concerned parties in Nottinghamshire's local community, and particularly with local councillors from Broxtowe Borough Council in the Trowell area, to better understand flooding related issues.

In July 2018 the Government published the Surface Water Management Action Plan (SWMAP). This SWMAP sets out the steps the Government is taking, with the Environment Agency and others, to manage the risk of surface water flooding. As part of this, in July 2019, the Government commissioned an independent review of

the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets.

The Government is currently investing £2.6 billion to deliver more than 1,000 flood defence projects to better protect 300,000 homes by 2021. In Nottinghamshire, we have invested £38.8 million in flood defences between 2010 and 2019, providing better protection for around 14,400 homes. At the Budget in March, it was confirmed that Government will double the amount it invests in the flood and coastal defence programme in England to £5.2 billion over six years from 2021, better protecting a further 336,000 properties, including 290,000 homes.

■ **Highly Protected Marine Areas: Angling**

Sir Charles Walker:

[63245]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to page 65 of the Benyon review Into Highly Protected Marine Areas; if he will make it his policy to not assign recreational angling with the red designation that applies to dredging, littering, discharges and commercial fishing; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

We welcome the publication of the Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) on 8 June 2020, which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/highly-protected-marine-areas-hpmas-review-2019>. We will consider Richard Benyon's report and issue a formal response to him in due course. The panel recommended that HPMAs would represent the upper end of environmental protection and should exclude all extractive activity, including recreational sea angling, to allow for full ecosystem recovery.

Defra recognises the importance of recreational sea angling to the economy, its benefits to the health and welfare of society, and the contribution anglers and angling bodies make to environmental improvements. We appreciate and understand the concerns raised by the recreational sea anglers since publication of the Benyon Review. We would consider the socio-economic impact of HPMAs on all sectors, including recreational sea angling, and consult extensively before any decision to designate a site.

■ **National Parks Authorities: Public Appointments**

Layla Moran:

[63478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to create direct elections to national park governing boards.

Rebecca Pow:

National Park Authority members are selected by constituent local authorities or parish councils or are appointed by the Secretary of State following open competition.

The independent review of Designated Landscapes led by Julian Glover, published in 2019, proposed reforms to the governance of National Parks. The proposed reforms

do not include direct elections to National Park Authorities. The Government is carefully considering the Glover proposals and will respond in due course.

■ Nature Conservation

Lilian Greenwood: [\[64166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to consult on the procedure for (a) preparation, (b) publication and (c) review of local nature recovery strategies.

Rebecca Pow:

Clause 96 of the Environment Bill proposes giving power to the Secretary of State to bring forward regulations specifying the procedure to be followed in preparing, publishing, reviewing and republishing Local Nature Recovery Strategies. In developing these regulations we will seek views from stakeholders and partners. We will be considering our approach to this following Royal Assent of the Bill.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[64168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to conduct pilots for local nature recovery strategies.

Rebecca Pow:

We are exploring options to pilot Local Nature Recovery Strategies in up to five locations this year and are in the early stages of discussions with local partners. We will issue further information shortly.

■ Nature Conservation: Finance

Lilian Greenwood: [\[64167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding he plans to make available to responsible authorities for local nature recovery strategies.

Rebecca Pow:

We have worked closely with local authorities and other public bodies to develop the Environment Bill, and are committed to engaging with them to bring forward a sensible implementation plan for the Bill that maximises effective delivery and minimises additional burdens.

We will fully fund all new burdens arising from the Bill to ensure these flagship measures become a reality. We will be bidding through the next spending review to secure necessary funds.

■ Nature Conservation: Maps

Lilian Greenwood: [\[64169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timescale is for publication of the first national habitat map for England.

Rebecca Pow:

My officials will be working with Natural England and local partners to pilot approaches to the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) in up to five areas in England. In these pilots we will explore how national data can best inform the production of LNRSs. We will then bring forward proposals for the national habitat map as soon as possible after Royal Assent of the Environment Bill.

■ **Nature for Climate Fund**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[64165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timescale is for launching the Nature for Climate Fund announced in the Budget 2020; what the duration of that fund will be; and how much funding will be available through that fund.

Rebecca Pow:

The £640 million Nature for Climate Fund, announced in the Budget, will increase tree planting and peat restoration in England over this Parliament. Plans to deliver this will be set out in the forthcoming England Tree Strategy and Peat Strategy later this year. We are currently consulting on the Tree Strategy and engaging stakeholders further on a future Peat Strategy.

■ **Veterinary Services: Unfair Practices**

Lee Anderson: [\[61806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle exploitative practices by out of hours vet care providers which operate monopolies of practice over large geographical areas.

Victoria Prentis:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is the independent non-Ministerial department responsible for investigating competition issues in the UK. The Government has ensured that the CMA has significant powers to investigate and act if it finds that companies are behaving anti-competitively in a market. Individuals can report anti-competitive behaviour by emailing the CMA at general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk.

■ **Zoos Support Fund**

Alex Sobel: [\[63487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which zoos and safari parks have accessed the Coronavirus Zoos Support Fund.

Victoria Prentis:

As of 29 June, 46 zoos and aquariums have accessed Defra's COVID-19 Zoos Support Fund and signed a grant agreement. These are provided in a list below. On 27 June, the Government announced that zoos and aquariums are set to receive up to £100 million in additional support to help them continue to care for their animals through the COVID-19 pandemic.

-
- Skegness Aquarium (Teen Spirit Ltd.)
 - Ark Wildlife Park (Jurassic Encounters)
 - Shepreth Wildlife Park
 - Tamar Otter & Wildlife Centre
 - Cumbria Zoo
 - Becky Fall's Ancient Woodland
 - Predator Experience
 - The Owl and Monkey Haven (The Leaf Foundation)
 - Amazon World Zoo Park (Island Amazon Adventure)
 - Wild Discovery
 - Avon Valley Country Park
 - Woodside Wildlife Park
 - Dartmoor Zoological Park
 - Oasis Camel Park
 - Amazona Zoo (Brazilia Ltd.)
 - The Falconry Centre
 - Chew Valley Animal Park
 - Combe Martin Wildlife & Dinosaur Park
 - Exmoor Zoological Park
 - White Post Farm
 - Lake District Wildlife Park
 - Ventura Wildlife Park
 - The New Forest Wildlife Park
 - Green Dragon Rare Breeds Farm and Eco Centre
 - The Living Rainforest (Trust for Sustainable Living)
 - Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom
 - Porfell Wildlife Park & Sanctuary
 - National Centre for Birds of Prey (Duncombe Park)
 - Raptor Foundation
 - Battersea Park Children's Zoo
 - Ilfracombe Aquarium
 - The Whitehouse Centre

- Old Macdonald's Farm & Fun Park
- Jimmy's Farm & Wildlife Park (The Essex Pig Company)
- Wildwood Escot
- Hamerton Zoological Park
- Lee Valley Park Farm (Coda Falconry)
- Dorset Falconry Park (Xtreme Falconry)
- Noah's Ark Zoo Farm
- Tropiquaria Zoo
- Ponderosa Zoo
- Bowland Wild Boar Park (Simply Native Ltd.)
- Liberty's Owl, Raptor & Reptile Centre
- Zoo2U
- Kirkleatham Owl Centre
- Southend SeaLife Adventure

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Darren Henry:

[61830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the development of a covid-19 vaccine (a) in the UK and (b) throughout the world.

Wendy Morton:

Finding a COVID-19 vaccine is a top priority for the UK Government. The Prime Minister has set up a Vaccine Taskforce and appointed Kate Bingham to lead it. Through the UK's Vaccine Taskforce, the Government is providing industry and research institutions with the resources and support they need, including over £130 million to global vaccine frontrunners being trialled at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London. However, it's not only about finding a successful vaccine. We need better treatments and testing too in order to treat people more effectively and slow the spread of the virus.

The UK has called for clear global commitments from international partners to tackle the pandemic, including through the G7 and G20. The Prime Minister hosted the Global Vaccine Summit on 4 June which brought together over 60 countries including 44 Heads of State and Government, and generated \$8.8 billion to support immunisation of over 300 million children from Covid and other preventable diseases. The UK is the largest donor to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to which we have committed £250 million and

£1.65 billion respectively. Our Ministers and diplomatic network continue to galvanise international support and financial commitments to support research, development and equitable access to a vaccine.

■ **Department for International Development: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Sarah Champion: [\[64201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the timetable is for the staffing restructure as his Department and the Department for International Development are merged.

James Cleverly:

The full details of the merger, including the structure of the new department, will be set out in due course. This work will take place over the coming months, and we will engage fully with staff throughout this process.

■ **Greece: Refugees**

Catherine West: [\[61748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of recent reports of the conduct of Hellenic coastguard's conduct towards refugees in the Aegean Sea in relation to international humanitarian, human rights and law on asylum.

Catherine West: [\[61749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government made to the Government of Greece on the conduct of the Hellenic coastguard in the Aegean Sea in relation to international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

Wendy Morton:

The Greek authorities are under considerable pressure, and the UK Government remains committed to supporting Greece's efforts to manage migration effectively. Greece has the right to control its borders but we urge all sides to uphold international human rights standards in respect of the migrants and to avoid any actions that may endanger human life.

■ **Greek Islands: Coronavirus**

Catherine West: [\[61751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure the protection of vulnerable migrants on the Greek islands at risk of sexual and gender-based violence due to the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Wendy Morton:

We have shared our concerns about conditions in the Greek hotspots with the Greek Government and are monitoring the situation closely. We continue to offer UK

support to alleviate pressure and deliver sustainable improvements in the Greek migration system.

■ **India: British Nationals Abroad**

Lisa Nandy: [\[63329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the British High Commission in India are providing to UK nationals detained in India following their attendance at an event held in the Nizamuddin area of Delhi in March 2020.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and our High Commission in New Delhi, are providing consular support to this group in the form of phone calls and we have raised medical and welfare concerns with the Indian authorities as appropriate. We are in direct contact with the individuals concerned, their families and lawyers.

■ **Nigeria: Internally Displaced People**

Ruth Jones: [\[61804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support Nigerians who have been displaced by violence between herders and farmers.

Ruth Jones: [\[61805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will provide NGOs that are running effective reconciliation programmes between farmers and herders in Nigeria with (a) funding and (b) capacity building to scale-up their programmes.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government has engaged closely with the Federal Government, state governments, international partners and the National Economic Council to help address the drivers of intercommunal violence and push for solutions.

The British High Commissioner and her team are increasing their engagement with state governments in affected states. For example, a team visited Plateau State in December to discuss the situation with the Governor, Christian and Muslim faith leaders, organisations working on reconciliation, and communities displaced by the violence.

The UK does not currently provide direct humanitarian funding to people displaced by intercommunal conflict in Nigeria. DFID is designing a programme to address conflict over natural resources in Nigeria, which will help to address some of the root causes of the violence. We are exploring whether this will include support to non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

■ Nigeria: Violence

Ruth Jones:

[[61798](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Nigerian counterpart on implementing the National Livestock Transformation Plan to help reduce conflict involving farmers and herders in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK worked closely with international partners to provide technical support to the Vice President's office to develop the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP). The plan sets out a long-term approach to transition towards more sedentary forms of cattle-rearing and explicitly addresses some of the factors underpinning intercommunal violence.

The NLTP is currently being implemented in eight 'Middle Belt' states. The British High Commission will continue to engage with the Vice President's office and relevant ministries on its further roll out. A number of additional states have expressed interest in the plan; we are encouraging their adoption of it through discussions with state governments

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Breast Cancer: Health Services

Rosie Cooper:

[[55907](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to ensure that the breast cancer imaging and diagnostic workforce has sufficient capacity to manage the backlog of patients resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 June 2020]: Despite facing enormous pressure from this unprecedented pandemic, the National Health Service continues to treat cancer patients as a priority.

On 29 April, Simon Stevens and Amanda Pritchard wrote to colleagues across the NHS to set out the expectation that local systems and Cancer Alliances continue to identify ring-fenced diagnostic capacity for cancer and sought assurance from regional cancer Senior Responsible Officers that appropriate arrangements were in place. On 8 June, further [guidance](#) was issued on the second phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 for cancer services.

The NHS England and NHS Improvement national cancer team is supporting planning by providing analytical modelling about the local capacity required to catch up on demand for diagnostics and acting as a central link to the independent sector partnership so that local systems can be supported with additional capacity where required.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus**Navendu Mishra:** [\[55135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of a potential increase in cancer mortality rates as a result of delays to treatment and surgery arising from the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has currently been made. The true impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on cancer mortality rates will become clearer as the results of data collection and analysis are published over time.

In response to COVID-19, 21 Cancer Alliances across England now have arrangements in place for cancer hubs, in order to allow essential and urgent cancer treatment to continue throughout the pandemic period, and we are now working on the restoration and recovery of all cancer services.

As part of the restoration of services, NHS services will continue to identify ring-fenced diagnostic and surgical capacity for cancer, as well as delivering treating patients in cancer hubs, to ensure that referrals, diagnostics and treatment are brought back to pre-pandemic levels.

■ Cancer: Hospitals**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[56182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing covid-19 free safe spaces within hospitals for the treatment of cancer patients.

Jo Churchill:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 21 Cancer Alliances across England now have arrangements in place for cancer hubs. These are hospitals dedicated to cancer care away from hospitals dealing with COVID-19 to keep often vulnerable cancer patients safe.

A letter was issued to trusts on 29 April 2020 detailing the Second Phase of Response to COVID-19 setting out local systems and Cancer Alliances must continue to identify ring-fenced diagnostic and surgical capacity for cancer, and providers must protect and deliver cancer surgery and cancer treatment by ensuring that cancer surgery hubs are fully operational. Full use should be made of the available contracted independent sector hospital and diagnostic capacity locally and regionally.

■ Cancer: Mental Health**Rosie Cooper:** [\[55912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to include data collection on psychological and emotional wellbeing in future National Cancer Patient Experience Surveys.

Jo Churchill:

The National Cancer Patient Experience Survey includes the questions below which relate to psychological and emotional wellbeing:

- During your hospital visit, did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?
- While you were being treated as an outpatient or day case, did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?
- Did hospital staff give you information about support or self-help groups for people with cancer?
- Did hospital staff give you information about how to get financial help or any benefits you might be entitled to?
- Did hospital staff tell you that you could get free prescriptions?

The survey benefits from the expertise of an advisory group which includes a wide range of stakeholders such as patients, clinicians, commissioners and charities. The survey content is reviewed each time it is carried out and any changes discussed with the advisory group.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Stella Creasy:**[\[61490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued on covid-19 testing for people who have relatives in care homes; and when people will be able to visit those homes.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 23 June 2020]: Anyone with suspected COVID-19 symptoms can access testing by using the self-referral portal. More information is available at the following link:

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

While we have recommended that care homes limit non-essential visits, we are clear that visits at the end of life are important both for the individual and their loved ones and should continue with appropriate infection control precautions.

We are aware that limiting visits in care homes is difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones.

We are reviewing our policy on visitors and are looking to update our guidance shortly and continuing to explore how we support the sector.

■ **Care Homes: Protective Clothing**

Helen Hayes: [\[60833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 52266, on Care Homes: Protective Clothing, if his Department will list the designated wholesalers for onward sale to social care providers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 June 2020]: On 15 April, the Adult Social Care Action Plan set out how the Government will support the adult social care sector specifically and includes guidance on the use and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) in social care settings. In this plan, the Government listed the designated wholesalers equipped with PPE for onward sale to social care providers.

Additional communications to social care settings have gone out to the sector as more suppliers have come forward to assist, subject to our due diligence process.

■ **Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

Helen Hayes: [\[60836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) extent and (b) terms of Zühlke Engineering's involvement has been in the management and development of the NHS covid-19 contact tracing app; and whether staff of Zühlke Engineering based outside of the UK will be able to access data from that app.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 June 2020]: Zühlke Engineering has been awarded contracts for mobile development, and for build assurance and system integration. It has also been awarded a contract to support the app in later stages. Private commercial companies, including Zühlke Engineering, do not have access to personally identifiable data.

Joanna Cherry: [\[61730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the governance arrangements are for the development of the NHS COVID-19 app.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 June 2020]: We will review governance arrangements as part of the next phase of the development of the National Health Service COVID-19 app. We have previously drawn on expertise from across Government, civil society and industry to review our design and help test the app, including providing technical assurance.

Owen Thompson: [\[61739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what lessons his Department learned from the development phase of the centralised coronavirus contact-tracing app; and which of those lessons were applied to the development of the Track and Trace app.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 June 2020]: Rigorous testing has been underway through development of the contact tracing app, including during the Isle of Wight pilot and in field tests. All of the lessons learned will be applied to the development of the app moving forwards.

Contact Tracing: Coronavirus**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[58808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse is of the (a) establishment of the NHS Test and Trace system and (b) recruitment of 25,000 NHS Test and Trace caseworkers.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing which brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service.

We have recruited 25,000 contact tracing staff in England to support this service. These staff are a mix of call handlers and health professionals. Final agreed contract values of procuring the call handling service will be published in the individual Contract Award Notices in the Official Journal of the European; and we publish certain information on Contracts Finder about contracts awarded.

These staff are in addition to existing public health experts from Public Health England (PHE) and local government. PHE staff are not employed exclusively as 'contact tracers'. Contact tracing is undertaken by local health protection teams and the field epidemiology service who are trained in contact tracing and undertake more complex contact tracing work but also carry out other roles.

Coronavirus: Alcoholic Drinks**Fiona Bruce:**[\[58680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent a rise in alcohol use during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2020]: Public Health England (PHE) published advice and information for the public on looking after their mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak, which recommends people avoid using alcohol. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak alcohol treatment providers are continuing to support and treat people misusing alcohol. The guidance can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

PHE continues to maintain the FRANK website and helpline, which provides a service for people who are concerned about their own or others' alcohol consumption. The website can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Afzal Khan: [\[59599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the procurement process for the contract to operate covid-19 contact tracing services began; and if he will make a statement.

Afzal Khan: [\[59600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish a contract award notice for the contract given to Serco to operate covid-19 contact tracing services.

Afzal Khan: [\[59606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the key performance indicators for the private contracts that have been awarded for the operation of the covid-19 testing and tracing services.

Afzal Khan: [\[59607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will provide details of the performance of contracts for the operation of the covid-19 testing and tracing services with (a) Serco and (c) other private contractors.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The engagement process for this contract began in April 2020 utilising the Crown Commercial Service Contact Centre Services framework.

The Contract Award Notice contract and certain other contractual information will be published on contracts finder. Publication of this information is being carried out as quickly as resources allow in light of the large increase in COVID-19 related contracts being awarded.

Details of Key Performance Indicators will be published as part of the information placed on Contracts Finder.

The Department will publish all information that it is required to do as soon as reasonably practical.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Bambos Charalambous: [\[53563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of Population-wide Testing, contact Tracing and Isolation to bring the covid-19 pandemic under control and safely lift the lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020. This includes enhanced contact tracing which brings together testing, contact tracing and outbreak management into an end-to-end service.

The more rapidly we can identify people who may have been at risk of infection and, if necessary, tell them to self-isolate, the more effectively we can reduce the R rate, spread of the virus and maintain transmission at low levels in order to safely lift the lockdown.

Kate Osborne:[\[53644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of regional lockdowns where there is a high covid-19 infection rate.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 June 2020]: We are currently considering a range of options for addressing future phases of the COVID-19, including the implementation of tailoring containment measures to the regional and local level. As recently announced, each local authority has been allocated funding to develop local outbreak control plans, working with local National Health Service, Public Health England and other stakeholders.

Any decisions on how to approach the mid-to long-term strategy to address the pandemic will be led by the science, build on the Government's test and trace strategy, and be supported by the new Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Chi Onwurah:[\[54108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of levels of technological literacy amongst high-risk older population on the use of the covid-19 tracing app.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We will always comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, which considers the impact of a policy or decision on groups with protected characteristics, and we have carried out an Equality and Health Impact Assessment.

We are working hard to ensure alignment between the app and traditional contact tracing measures so that they complement each other and work together to protect vulnerable groups, including those who are unable or do not wish to use digital tools.

We have carried out many rounds of user research and testing throughout the development of the app, with people of different ages, genders, ethnicities, socio-economic status, and digital skills, to ensure it meets the needs of different groups.

■ **Coronavirus: Social Distancing**

Sir John Hayes: [\[61425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing the recommended social distance from two meters to 0.5 meters.

Helen Whately:

The Government has commissioned a review into the two metre (six feet) social distancing rule and we are working as quickly as possible to carry it out, taking advice from a range of experts, including the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Advisor, behavioural scientists and economists and ensuring it is comprehensive in examining how the two metre rule works in practice, the evidence around transmission of the virus in different environments, incidence rates, and international comparisons. The review is expected to be completed within the coming weeks.

■ **Coronavirus: Supported Housing**

Julian Sturdy: [\[61482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that emotional support through contact with family members for adults in supported living is included in the planning for the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Helen Whately:

The Government acknowledges that social distancing policy is having an impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Public Health England has published guidance on social distancing and self-isolation, and advice on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak, together with guidance for parents and carers about supporting their children's mental health and wellbeing.

On 5 June, the Government published guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19. On 12 June, the Government also updated its guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing), which sets out advice on staying safe when meeting family members, friends and how to form a support bubble. Both sets of guidance are must be referred to when planning visits to supported living environments.

We are also reviewing and updating the specific guidance on supported living environments, which will be published shortly.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Marketing**

Lee Rowley: [\[60850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department have made on rolling out the CARE brand.

Helen Whately:

In April 2020, the CARE brand was transferred to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care from the CARE Badge Community Interest Company.

When this transfer took place, the Government purchased the remaining stock of badges held by the previous brand owner. These were distributed at no cost to social care providers or members of the workforce. Additional badges have been procured and we expect to be able to start delivering them in July.

We also launched the CARE app on 6 May, which provides the social care workforce with advice, guidance, and mental health and wellbeing support, amongst other things, during this difficult time.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Coronavirus**Alex Norris:**[\[57331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) sexual health services and (b) contraceptive services are delivered to full capacity (i) during and (ii) after the covid-19 pandemic.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2020]: Sexual and reproductive health services are open. They have reduced their face-to-face appointments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but they will be able to see urgent, priority or vulnerable clients in person. Services are also maintaining access during this time through scaling up on online services. This can be achieved through a variety of routes, such as increasing eligibility through current provision or utilising a neighbours' service for residents of another local authority. Public Health England is also seeking to establish a national framework for online sexual and reproductive health services that local areas can choose to commission for their residents.

■ HIV Infection**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[56110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it is policy on HIV to set out a plan to (a) reduce inequalities in HIV services, (b) tackle stigma and discrimination associated with living with HIV, (c) increase testing of HIV and (d) improve the quality of life for people living with HIV.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 June 2020]: The Government has committed to eliminating new HIV transmissions in England by 2030. In October 2019, as part of the Government response to the Health and Social Care Select Committee report on sexual health, the Department also committed to the development of an updated sexual and reproductive health strategy. We will consider issues around inequalities, tackling stigma and discrimination and other relevant issues as part of the strategy development. We are proud that the United Kingdom is one of the first countries in the world to meet the UNAIDS 90:90:90 targets and the NHS continues to provide

world class treatment and care for people with HIV. In England, a range of approaches to HIV prevention are already in place; including the rollout of pre-exposure prophylaxis, encouraging condom use, needle exchange programmes, self-sampling and promoting expanded HIV testing and diagnosis.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Mr Laurence Robertson: [55848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing free vaccinations against influenza in advance of winter 2020 to anyone who requests one; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 June 2020]: The flu vaccination programme will be a critical part of preparing the United Kingdom for winter. On 14 May we published the Annual Flu letter 2020/21, available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885281/The_national_flu_immunisation_programme_2020_to_2021.pdf

This indicated the main groups who are eligible for free flu vaccination.

We are planning for the flu season well in advance and further details will be published soon.

■ Protective Clothing

Rachael Maskell: [39576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) ffp2 and (b) ffp3 masks have been (i) manufactured in the UK and (ii) imported into the UK in each week since 1 March 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 April 2020]: The Government announced on 15 May that more than 70 million FFP2 and FFP3 face masks will be manufactured in the United Kingdom and delivered to frontline health and care workers following an agreement with global technology company Honeywell. Production will begin as early as July and up to 4.5 million masks will be produced each month. Honeywell will produce 60% FFP3 and 40% FFP2 masks, but these percentages are moveable depending on requirements.

There are other existing manufacturers in the UK who supply the National Health Service.

■ Protective Clothing: Coronavirus

Marion Fellows: [59823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the production of windowed face masks.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom Government's national personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement team has been working extremely hard in recent weeks to source clear facemasks which comply with UK safety standards. While the product is not CE marked, UK Government regulators have agreed that a particular mask can enter the National Health Service supply chain for use during COVID-19 and further details will be announced as soon as possible about availability to health and care settings.

Where regulators find that PPE (as regulated by the Health and Safety Executive) or medical devices (as regulated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) can ensure an adequate level of health and safety in accordance with the essential requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) 2016/425 or the requirements of Directive 93/42/EEC, they may authorise the making available of these products for supply to frontline healthcare.

■ Protective Clothing: Exports**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[39532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many items of personal protective equipment have been shipped from the UK in each month of 2020.

Jo Churchill:

HM Revenue and Customs is responsible for the collection and publication of data on United Kingdom imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC releases this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics.

There is aggregated trade data available for personal protective equipment (PPE) goods and for the periods requested on HMRC's website, under 'Build your own data tables' at the following link:

uktradeinfo.com

The site also contains a 'Help' function with information on how to extract trade data.

HMRC also maintains a list of COVID-19 products, including PPE goods, and their commodity codes on GOV.UK. Unfortunately, the trade data collected does not allow HMRC to distinguish PPE goods classified under a particular commodity code from any non-PPE goods classified under that same commodity code.

■ Protective Clothing: Hearing Impaired**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[47384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that transparent face masks are provided for health and care staff who are treating deaf people who rely on lip-reading.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[47385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to promote (a) the availability of transparent face masks and (b) public understanding of the challenges facing deaf people who rely on lip-reading during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom Government's national personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement team has been working extremely hard to source clear facemasks which comply with UK safety standards. While the product is not CE marked, UK Government regulators have agreed that a particular mask can enter the National Health Service supply chain for use during COVID-19 and further details will be announced as soon as possible about availability to health and care settings.

Where regulators find that PPE (as regulated by the Health and Safety Executive) or medical devices (as regulated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) can ensure an adequate level of health and safety in accordance with the essential requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) 2016/425 or the requirements of Directive 93/42/EEC, they may authorise the making available of these products for supply to frontline healthcare.

■ **Protective Clothing: Procurement**

Helen Hayes:

[\[60834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to to Answer of 10 June 2020 to Question HL3357, how many new supply lines have been secured by the cross-Government personal protective equipment sourcing unit.

Jo Churchill:

The combined Department for International Trade, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Health and Social Care efforts have resulted in the Department of Health and Social Care raising Purchase orders for over 17.7 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE); direct from new relationships in source countries, as well as through trusted United Kingdom suppliers to the National Health Service, who themselves are using their global connections to help us. The Government has rapidly processed over 23,000 cases from over 15,000 suppliers to ensure they meet the safety and quality standards that NHS staff need, as well as prioritising offers of larger volumes. The Government has so far actively engaged with over 99% of the companies that have offered PPE and has contracted with over 150 new suppliers able to deliver at the scale and pace the UK requires. Additionally, the Government is building up UK manufacturing with signed contracts to manufacture over 2 billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers.

■ Protective Clothing: Textiles

Catherine West: [\[37884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that there is an adequate supply of fabric for industry and voluntary groups to provide personal protective equipment for NHS and care workers.

Jo Churchill:

Lord Deighton is leading efforts to increase the domestic supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). Contracts have been signed for over 2 billion items of PPE through United Kingdom-based manufacturers, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons.

Don & Low will be manufacturing 12 million metres squared of fabric for gowns over the next six months, with the first delivery expected later this month. We continue to look for opportunities to secure materials as well as manufacturers.

■ Radiotherapy

Tim Farron: [\[55672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timescale is for the roll-out of Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 June 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement expect that all radiotherapy providers will be able to deliver Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy to treat non-small cell lung cancer as well as lung, lymph node and non-spine bone oligometastatic disease by March 2021.

■ Ventilators

Justin Madders: [\[38603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new ventilators have been purchased from outside the UK since 31 January 2020.

Edward Argar:

We have been working rapidly to secure additional ventilator capacity through established United Kingdom suppliers and from overseas. The Joint Action Coordination Team was established, which works across the Department for International Trade and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to provide support and assistance for all international procurement work.

The Government is doing everything it can to ensure the National Health Service and care workers have the equipment and support they need to tackle this outbreak. Our overseas diplomatic network is engaged in a massive international procurement effort underway to buy the additional medical equipment the NHS needs. Almost 900 ventilators from overseas have arrived since March. They have been bought or donated from China, the United States, Germany, and Taiwan. Thousands more are due to arrive over the coming weeks.

HOME OFFICE

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Tom Hunt: [\[46161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the cost of Government-arranged accommodation for international arrivals who have not arranged accommodation in which to quarantine for 14 days will be paid for from the public purse.

Kevin Foster:

Where people arrive and are non-symptomatic, they are expected to have arranged their own accommodation.

If for some reason they require different accommodation, they can use the government organised hotel booking service where all costs will fall to the traveller.

Existing immigration rules allow for a traveller who has insufficient funds to support themselves during a visit to be refused entry to the UK.

Where people arrive and are symptomatic, and they do not have suitable accommodation to self-isolate, the government will provide suitable accommodation until such time as they either complete the 14 day period, recover from their symptoms or have a test which confirms they do not have the virus. In this circumstance the traveller will be expected to cover all other expenditure during the period they are in a government quarantine facility.

■ Detention Centres: Closures

Jess Phillips: [\[32148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will close (a) Yarl's Wood and (b) other detention centres as a result of covid-19.

Chris Philp:

No. There are currently no plans for the temporary closure of any of our immigration removal centres. The health of those in immigration removal centres is of the utmost importance but we remain committed to removing foreign national offenders or those who violate our immigration rules. Detention plays a key role in securing our borders and maintaining effective immigration control.

Decisions to detain an individual are based on all of the information known at the time. As circumstances change, temporary release may then become the most appropriate option.

As of 23 June, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the immigration detention estate.

■ Domestic Abuse: LGBT People

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[63552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allocating long-term ring-fenced funding to ensure the (a) sustainability and (b) expansion of local LGBT services delivering specialist support to LGBT domestic abuse survivors.

Victoria Atkins:

It is important that all survivors of domestic abuse have access to appropriate support services according to their needs, and a range of funding exists to ensure the provision of such services.

The Home Office has provided £120,000 of funding each year since 2016 for the National LGBT Domestic Abuse helpline, which provides emotional and practical support for LGBT+ people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. We have provided additional funding to bolster the helpline during COVID-19.

To enable us to better understand the complex landscape for community-based support for all victims, including those who are LGBT+, the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner has agreed to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current community-based support landscape over 2020/21.

The Government will then work with the Commissioner to understand the needs identified and develop options on how best to address them.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Training

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to equip and train the fire service to deal with LiBESS fires.

James Brokenshire:

It is the responsibility of individual Fire and Rescues Services to ensure their staff are adequately equipped and trained to meet all local operational needs, including specialist procedures related to batteries and other potentially dangerous materials.

The National Fire Chiefs Council provides National Operational Guidance covering a wide range of specialist operational activities which can be drawn upon by the Fire and Rescue Services.

■ Health Services: EU Nationals

Neale Hanvey:

[\[60875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 5 March 2020 to Question 23401 which states that confirmation of settled or pre-settled status is not required to access NHS care, for what reason get hospital treatment is listed as a reason on the online EU settled status scheme form for proving one's status to a requesting organisation/individual from 1 January 2021 onwards.

Kevin Foster:

It is correct European Economic Area and Swiss citizens do not require Home Office confirmation of settled or pre-settled status granted under the EU Settlement Scheme to access National Health Service care.

Individuals may wish to rely on the fact they have been granted status under the Scheme as part of demonstrating their ordinary residence in the UK. The online View and Prove service therefore offers this as an option, should users wish to share their status for this purpose. It is entirely optional.

EEA and Swiss citizens continue to be able to use their passport or national identity card to evidence their right to access services and this will not change until 30 June 2021.

From 2021, when the new immigration system is introduced, EEA or Swiss patients will be required to demonstrate they are ordinarily resident in the UK, as is already presently the case for non-EEA nationals who are not the family member of an EEA citizen. They can do this by relying on the status they have been granted under the Scheme.

EEA nationals who do not have protected rights will be bound by the new global immigration system.

■ **Hezbollah****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[62325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in the UK have been (a) investigated and (b) charged for displaying the flag or other symbols of Hezbollah since March 2019.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office does not collect specific statistics on the number of people in the UK who have been (a) investigated or (b) charged with displaying the flag or other symbols of Hezbollah or other proscribed organisations.

It is an offence under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000 to carry or display articles supporting a proscribed organisation. Data relating to this offence is included with Sections 11 and 12 of the Act in the publication 'Operation of Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000'.

The most recent publication up to year ending March 2020, was published on 11 June on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-financial-year-ending-march-2020>

■ **Home Office: Overseas Aid****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[63287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which Official Development Assistance programmes that her Department funds focus on supporting women and girls.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act, IDA), legally requires all overseas development funding to 'meaningfully consider' the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality.

The programmes that the Home Office funds that focus on supporting women and girls are the End Violence against Children Programme, the modern slavery Victim Care Contract, and the Modern Slavery Fund.

■ Home Office: Renewable Energy**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[60663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) solar panels and (b) wind turbines her Department's buildings (a) have in 2020 and (b) had in each of the last five years.

James Brokenshire:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The Home Office is committed to reducing its carbon emissions on a trajectory to Net Zero by 2050 or sooner; and has reduced its total emissions by 55% by 2019-20 compared to 2009-10. During 2020-21 a study will be commissioned to understand how Home Office will meet the Government's net zero by 2050 target whilst working to make the estate more sustainable including opportunities to adopt renewable energy. Site specific renewables surveys are already underway to determine the scope for using a range of renewable technologies, including solar panels and wind turbines.

■ Immigrants: Coronavirus**Rachel Reeves:**[\[32682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support will be made available to migrants with insecure immigration status during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The Government has put in place a range of measures to ensure people can stay safe and many of these are available for those with a No recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition. We have also published advice and information about the support available to migrants living here, including where they are subject to NRPF

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

Testing and treatment for Covid-19 is free of charge to all regardless of immigration status and NHS Trusts have been advised that no immigration checks are required for these patients.

Local authorities may also provide basic safety net support, regardless of immigration status, if it is established that there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely

from destitution, for example, where there are community care needs, migrants with serious health problems or family cases where the wellbeing of a child is in question.

The Government has allocated more than £3.2 billion to local authorities in England to help them respond to Covid-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including services helping the most vulnerable. The funding will mean councils can continue to provide vital services, including adult social care and children's services.

■ Immigrants: Health Services

Dan Jarvis: [\[63348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the termination of the Immigration Health Surcharge to the families of NHS staff.

Kevin Foster:

On 21 May, it was announced that the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care were to work together to exempt NHS and health and care staff from the Immigration Health Surcharge. Officials in the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care are working through how to implement this change. Arrangements are being worked out and more details will be announced in due course.

■ Immigration: Au Pairs

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[63373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what status and rights au pairs will have in the Government's new immigration policy.

Kevin Foster:

The UK's points-based immigration system will not offer a dedicated route for au pairs, as has been the case since 2008. However, there are other immigration routes which will exist for people who may wish to take up these roles, such as the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS).

We have indicated our desire to negotiate a YMS with the EU, or with individual countries within it, ensuring young people can continue to enjoy the social, cultural and educational benefits of living in the EU and the UK.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[12351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 January 2020 to Question 3789 on Immigration: EU Nationals, whether her Department has used the electoral roll to contact EU citizens on applying for (a) settled or (b) pre-settled status.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has not used the electoral roll to contact EU citizens about applying for settled or pre-settled status. In order to ensure that resident EEA nationals and their family members understand how and by when to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, the Home Office has put in place a comprehensive communications and engagement plan, using all available channels to reach our audiences – such as marketing, presentations, email updates, toolkits and webinars.

Caroline Lucas:[\[8209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 16 October 2019 to freedom of information request 54536, for what reason 89.5 per cent of administrative reviews of EU Settlement Scheme applications resulted in an initial decision being overturned; what steps her Department is taking to (a) improve decision making to ensure the accuracy of initial decisions and (b) issue guidance to claimants undertaking the application process on the evidence required for settled status; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The number of administrative reviews of decisions under the EU Settlement Scheme is very low compared to the number of applications concluded (more than 3.3 million) to 31 May 2020.

Where EU Settlement Scheme decisions are overturned at administrative review, in the majority of cases this is a result of applicants providing new information or evidence which was not provided with their original application.

There are a small number of cases where a caseworker error has occurred, and in such cases the application fee for the administrative review is refunded. Our administrative review teams provide feedback to the initial decision-making teams to reduce the likelihood of such errors being repeated.

There is a wide range of guidance and support available for applicants and, where necessary, our caseworkers will work with applicants to help them provide the evidence required to qualify for status under the scheme. More information on the evidence required when making an application is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/what-youll-need-to-apply>.

■ Migrant Camps: Greece**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[3787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate the Government has made of the number of children in refugee camps in Greece who have an adult relative in the UK.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[3788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that any unaccompanied child refugee or asylum-seeker in another

European country with an adult relative in the UK has been contacted in order to reunite them with their family member.

Chris Philp:

The UK maintains close operational links with EU Member States in order to transfer those children who are assessed to be eligible to transfer under the Dublin III Regulation.

It is the responsibility of the EU Member State where the unaccompanied child resides to identify those children who would be eligible for transfer to another Member State under the Dublin III Regulation. The Home Office does not have access to the personal details of all unaccompanied children present in other EU Member States.

The Home Office publishes annual data on the Dublin III Regulation in the Immigration Statistics. This includes data on the number of requests to transfer into and out of the UK and the number acceptances and transfers into and out of, broken down by article and Member State requesting. The latest data, covering up to 2019, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#dublin-regulation>

Instructions on how to use the data can be found in the 'Notes' sheet.

■ **Migrant Workers: NHS**

Dan Jarvis:

[63347]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will grant indefinite leave to remain to NHS staff who have worked during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

NHS workers from overseas have made a huge contribution in tackling the current pandemic. We are extending the leave of key NHS frontline health workers and their dependants by one year, free of immigration fees and health surcharge, if it was due to expire before October 2020. This offer has also been extended to cover those working in key healthcare roles in the independent health and care sector. However, indefinite leave to remain is based on a number of requirements, including a period of lawful residence in the UK without excess absences, sufficient knowledge of the English language and life in the UK, and any specific requirements of the visa route they are in.

Families and dependants of all health workers who sadly pass away due to contracting the COVID-19 virus will be offered immediate indefinite leave to remain, without a requirement to pay a fee. We hope the number of people who find themselves in this position is very small. Our thoughts go out to the families and friends of all medical professionals who have passed away while fighting to keep us safe.

■ Migrant Workers: Visas

Layla Moran:

[[64305](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many health workers (a) were eligible and (b) applied for a visa extension as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The Department for Health and Social Care estimated that up to 3000 individuals would be eligible for the NHS Visa Extension; applications are currently on course to exceed that estimate.

■ Order of Nine Angles

Stephen Doughty:

[[64196](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to proscribe the Order of Nine Angles.

James Brokenshire:

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

The Government keeps the list of proscribed organisations under review.

■ Passports

Grahame Morris:

[[63309](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect on national security of moving the UK passport contract from De La Rue to French-based company Gemalto.

Kevin Foster:

Prior to inviting tenders for the latest contract to design, manufacture, and personalise British passports, the Home Office engaged with Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). The solution has been assured in line with the UK Security Policy Framework.

Since 2010 a proportion of British passports have been made overseas with no security or operational concerns. All passports continue to be personalised with the passport holder's details such as name and photograph, in the United Kingdom. This ensures no personal data will leave the UK.

■ Proscribed Organisations

Stephen Doughty:

[[64199](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the activities of Sonnenkrieg Division, System Resistance Network, and National Action since their proscription.

James Brokenshire:

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

■ **Repatriation: Charter Flights****Rachael Maskell:**[\[63414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of UK Visas and Immigration working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in relation to the (a) prioritisation of cases and (b) availability and scheduling of repatriation flights.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office work closely together to support British citizens and their dependants who are seeking to use repatriation flights. The FCO are ultimately responsible for the scheduling of flights and who is able to access them.

Some UK Visa Application Centres (VACs) are resuming services where local restrictions allow, and an effective service can be provided. Services will reopen in phases. For updates to the status of VACs, customers can check with:

TLS contact if they are in Europe, Africa and parts of the Middle East

VFS global for all other countries

Anybody who has immigration queries related to coronavirus can email the Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre. Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk. Their email must be in English.

■ **Repatriation: Coronavirus****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[38020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what changes have been made in response to the covid-19 outbreak to arrival procedures at small and private ports and airports for returning UK citizens and foreign nationals.

Chris Philp:

Border Force is continuing to keep the UK's border secure and has robust contingency plans in place to respond the covid-19 pandemic driven by the latest scientific and medical advice.

We exercise a range of options at small and remote ports dependent on risk and continue to do so in line with public health and devolved administrations, without comprising security checks.

From 8 June, all passenger arrivals in the UK have been required to complete a locator-form as well as self-isolate for 14 days, apart from those on a short list of exemptions.

Border Force are working closely with law enforcement partners on the response to threats at the border during the COVID outbreak, and that includes our response at smaller airports/ports.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Rachel Hopkins: [63563]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available to people who have travelled to the UK without quarantine accommodation.

Kevin Foster:

We have been clear that people should arrange their accommodation before they travel to the UK and the vast majority of travellers have complied.

For the small minority who don't, the Government will support them in finding appropriate accommodation, upon arrival, and this will be at their own expense.

In the scenario where an arrival presents (at the UK border) as symptomatic, and they do not have suitable accommodation, they will be housed in a government facility for the duration of their self-isolation.

Rachel Hopkins: [63564]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department is providing to people travelling to the UK without access to quarantine accommodation.

Kevin Foster:

Guidance for traveling to the UK and how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK can be found on the.gov.uk website at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

■ Visas

Hywel Williams: [63234]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Priority Service and Super Priority Service for visa and indefinite leave to remain applications will resume.

Hywel Williams: [63235]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to indefinite leave to remain decisions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the suspension of the priority and super priority services on the ability of international students to start university courses in September 2020.

Kevin Foster:

International students travelling to the UK to commence courses in the Autumn semester are not considered under the indefinite leave to remain route.

We continually review our global visa operation to improve performance and ensure value for money while maintaining excellent customer service.

We have not yet re-introduced Super Priority and Priority visa services, but are keeping the position under constant review as more of our visa application centres reopen. The decision to reopen visa application centres is taken in conjunction with our commercial partners and is subject to the easing of restrictions in locations by host Governments. As centres reopen details of these will be published on our commercial partner websites.

■ Visas: Coronavirus

Claire Hanna:

[32180]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people with (a) ancestry and (b) other visas who have no recourse public funds; and what support is available to those people if they are made redundant during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

The number of people who are subject to “no recourse to public funds” is not part of the published statistics. Home Office analysts are looking at the available data to determine what figures could be produced using internal management information. However, given the fluid nature of migration in and out of the country, and the number of individuals making applications to change their status at any given time; it would be too complex to produce an accurate figure of how many people are subject to “no recourse to public funds” at any given time that could be assured to the standard required by the Code of Practice for Statistics for publication.

This Government has taken action across the system to support those with no recourse to public funds, including protections from eviction for renters and mortgage holidays, helping the employed, self-employed and those on zero-hour contracts. Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the restriction lifted by making a ‘change of conditions’ application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances. The Home Office has recently digitised the application form to make sure it is accessible for those who need to remain at home, and those who do not have internet access or are not confident using a computer can access phone support to complete their application. Individuals with leave under the 5-yr parent route, or the 10-yr family or private life route, can apply for a fee waiver if they are destitute, would be rendered destitute by payment of the fee, or where there are other exceptional circumstances. More information for migrants living in the UK can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-get-support-if-youre-a-migrant-living-in-the-uk>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Business and Tourism: Coronavirus****Stephen Morgan:**[\[61768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the ability of the (a) pubs and hotels, (b) manufacturing companies with a rateable value under £15,000 (c) larger visitor economy businesses with a rateable value of above £51,000 unable to access government covid-19 grant schemes to survive post covid-19.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has announced a package of support for business to help with their ongoing costs in recognition of the disruption caused by Covid-19. This includes £12.33 billion to local authorities in England to support businesses under the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund. As at 14 June, £10.36 billion has been paid out to over 844,000 business properties across the two schemes.

We do not hold data from local authorities broken down by sector. We have, however, published a full breakdown of grant funding allocated to and distributed by each local authority here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>

On 1 May, Government announced a further £617 million available, in the form of the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund, for local authorities to support small businesses that are not eligible for business rates or rates relief and are therefore not in scope of the existing grant schemes. Local authorities are responsible for defining precise eligibility for this scheme, and have discretion to pay grants to businesses based on local economic need – within the national guidance:

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

Local authorities will need to manage their schemes effectively to stay within their Discretionary Grants Fund allocation, and there are no plans to change the scope of this scheme. However, as with other business support measures, Ministers continue to keep the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund under review, monitoring roll-out and level of demand to see where any additional support could be offered to help businesses and support local economies.

Businesses which are not eligible for the grants schemes should be able to benefit from other measures in the Government's unprecedented package of support for business, including:

- An option to defer VAT payments by up to twelve months;
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, now extended to cover all businesses including those which would be able to access commercial credit;

- The Bounce Back Loan scheme, which will ensure that small and micro businesses can quickly access loans of up to £50,000 which are 100% guaranteed by the Government;
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to support businesses with their wage bills;
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, to provide support to the self-employed.

Further information on other business support measures can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

■ Community Relations

Naz Shah: [63364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to allocate similar levels of funding as previously allocated through the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund to new projects related to community integration.

Luke Hall:

This Government remains committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and continues to provide funding to help build strong, integrated communities.

We have launched the new ESOL for Integration Fund that will take a localised approach to boosting the English language skills of those residents with little or no English language, who may also be isolated or disconnected from services and the wider area. Up to £6.5 million has been made available in 2020/21 to support successful local authority proposals.

We have also launched the Faith, Race and Hate Crime grant scheme, which will support organisations that are working to bring different faith and ethnic groups together and tackle racially and religiously motivated hate crime to create integrated communities. Up to £2 million has been made available to support this work.

■ Economic Growth: Environment Protection and Planning Permission

Caroline Lucas: [63297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to amend planning regulations and environment protections to stimulate economic activity; and steps he will take to ensure that those changes do not undermine environmental aims set out in (a) the 25-Year Environment Plan, (b) the Environment Bill, (c) the Agriculture Bill and (d) net zero legislation.

Caroline Lucas: [63298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on amending planning regulations and environmental protections to stimulate economic activity.

Olivia Blake:

[\[63554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans with HM Treasury to make changes to (a) regulations and (b) environmental protections in order to stimulate economic activity.

Olivia Blake:

[\[63555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans his Department has to change planning regulations and environment protections in order to stimulate economic activity; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that potential regulatory changes do not undermine environmental aims under (a) the 25 year environment plan, (b) the Environment Bill, (c) the Agriculture Bill and (d) net zero legislation.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning system has a vital role to play in enabling the delivery of housing and economic growth that will support the United Kingdom's economic recovery. In March, the Government signalled its intention to modernise our planning system, ensuring it supports the delivery of homes that local people need and creates more beautiful and greener communities. Since then, we have developed a number of planning regulation easements to support businesses to operate through COVID-19. These include laying SIs to enable restaurants, cafes and pubs to offer a takeaway and delivery service and removing specific publicity requirements for planning application. In addition, on 24 June we laid an SI which allows up to two storeys to be added to an existing purpose-built free standing block of flats, of three storeys or more, to construct new homes. The right is subject to a maximum height limit for the newly extended building of 30 metres. We are continuing to work across government to investigate options for broader regulatory reform to support sustainable economic growth and renewal.

■ Hate Crime

Naz Shah:

[\[63363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding his Department has allocated from the public purse towards improving support for victims of racially and religiously motivated hatred in the most recent period for which such information is available.

Luke Hall:

My Department has so far allocated £890,000 for hate crime reporting and support of victims for the financial year 2020/21. We are also considering applications to our £2,000,000 Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme which closed to applications in May and is to support projects seeking to tackle religiously and racially motivated hate crime as well as social integration.

Naz Shah:

[\[63366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what criteria he plans to use to assess applications to his Department for grants for projects aimed at tackling hate crime.

Luke Hall:

Applications for projects tackling religiously and racially motivated hate crime are currently being considered under the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme. Proposals are expected to demonstrate how successful projects will work towards one or both of the following aims: i. To promote shared values among people of all backgrounds through sustainable social integration and meaningful civic participation and/or ii. To effectively tackle and prevent religiously and racially discriminatory behaviour and those acting against others because of their faith or race. Further detail on the application and assessment criteria has been set out in guidance for applicants which was published in April 2020.

■ Infrastructure: Local Government

Olivia Blake:

[\[63556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what role his Department has in developing the Government's Project Speed deregulation proposals.

Luke Hall:

We are committed to spreading opportunity and levelling up through investing in world class infrastructure. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has a key role to play in delivering this ambition: through our stewardship of the planning system; our work on levelling up across the country; and our work on housing.

We are already taking a number of steps, including:

- Committing to a new £10 billion Single Housing Infrastructure Fund, to ensure that infrastructure comes before people move into new homes. At Spring Budget, we also announced a further £1 billion funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to unlock almost 70,000 new homes.
- Extending the Affordable Homes Programme, with a new, multi-year settlement of £12 billion.
- Modernising our planning system to ensure that it supports the delivery of homes that local people need and creates more beautiful and greener communities.
- Delivering the £3.6 billion Towns Fund to unleash the potential of towns and high streets throughout the country.

On regulation specifically, we have developed a number of regulatory easements to support businesses to operate through COVID-19. These include:

- laying SIs to enable restaurants, cafes and pubs to offer a takeaway and delivery service;
- removing specific publicity requirements for planning application;
- measures to ease pressures and minimise cashflow issues for councils; and
- announcing that a planned revaluation of business rates will no longer take place in 2021, to help reduce uncertainty for firms affected by the impacts of COVID-19.

We are continuing to work across government to investigate options for broader regulatory reform to support economic growth and renewal, and ensure the investments outlines above deliver the maximum impact.

■ Integrated Communities Innovation Fund

Naz Shah:

[\[63365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish the results of his findings into the projects funded by the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund.

Luke Hall:

Our 16 trailblazing projects funded through the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund have engaged 70,000 people in a range of settings to stimulate and test innovative approaches to integration.

A national evaluator is currently compiling evidence on the effectiveness of each intervention. Although the coronavirus outbreak has meant that some of our funded projects have had to temporarily pause activity, our findings will be shared in due course and used to inform future policy.

■ Leasehold: Coronavirus

Stella Creasy:

[\[63330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what protection is available for leaseholders whose freehold management companies request excessive service charges to cover covid-19 related costs.

Luke Hall:

The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, these must be of a reasonable standard.

Leaseholders may make an application to the First-tier Tribunal to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges.

Following the lockdown due to COVID-19, freeholder repair and maintenance obligations have not changed and remain as set out in the lease. We are aware of concerns being raised by leaseholders about higher than expected service charges due to the effect of COVID-19. We are working with stakeholders to understand the issues freeholders and management companies are facing with the aim that they continue to deliver essential services in line with Government guidance.

Free initial advice is available to leaseholders via the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE). Further information on service charges and other leasehold matters can be provided through their website, via a telephone appointment with one of LEASE's advisers or by email.

■ **Local Government**

Simon Hoare:

[\[61745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of co-terminosity of local service provision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Devolution White Paper will set out our transformative plans for economic recovery and renewal, and for levelling up opportunity, prosperity, and well-being across the country, including what this means for the geography of local institutions and local service providers.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme**

Stephen McPartland:

[\[64181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on extending eligibility to Right to Buy discounts to Housing Association tenants.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government strongly believes in supporting social housing tenants to buy their own home. The Voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants is currently being piloted in the Midlands, which is giving thousands of tenants in the East and West Midlands the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of home ownership. The pilot will be fully evaluated after its completion. As set out in the 2019 manifesto, we will be evaluating new pilot areas, and we will announce more details on this in due course.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Rachel Hopkins:

[\[63565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is providing local councils with direct funding to support incoming travellers without accommodation to meet the Government's quarantine provisions.

Mr Simon Clarke:

All arrivals, bar a short list of exemptions, will be required to complete an online locator form to supply contact details, travel details and the address of where they will self-isolate for 14 days. Where international travellers are unable to safely self-isolate in their own accommodation, the Government will support them finding appropriate accommodation at their own expense.

■ Unitary Councils

Simon Hoare: [\[61741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what process needs to be followed by local authority areas which would like to achieve unitary status.

Simon Hoare: [\[61742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what criteria his Department will use to assess bids to establish a unitary authority; and whether unanimity of affected local authorities is required.

Simon Hoare: [\[61743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the minimum population size required is to form a unitary authority.

Simon Hoare: [\[61744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the maximum population size is in which a single unitary authority should operate.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Devolution White Paper to be published this Autumn will set out our transformative plans for economic recovery and renewal, and for levelling up opportunity, prosperity, and well-being across the country. These plans will include restructuring our local institutions to deliver these outcomes, establishing more mayors and more unitary councils the populations of which will depend on local circumstances but as a rule of thumb are expected to be substantially in excess of 300k-400k. Under current legislation it is open to the Secretary of State, subject to consultation and Parliamentary approval, to implement if he thinks fit any unitary proposal submitted by a council in response to an invitation which any council may request. In considering a unitary proposal the Secretary of State expects to have regard to the extent it is likely to support the delivery of the outcomes sought in the White Paper.

■ Visual Impairment: Coronavirus

Robert Langan: [\[61837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help local authorities ensure that visually impaired people are able to safely access public spaces in the context of social distancing requirements.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We published the Safer Public Places Guidance to provide owners and operators with a framework to support social distancing in public places. This guidance reminds owners and operators of public spaces to consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics such as visually impaired people.

Owners and operators are advised to carefully consider social distancing guidelines in public spaces, emphasise the latest government advice on safety procedures to visitors and provide clear and concise information to the public on how to adhere to social distancing. This could include providing information on changes for visually impaired visitors and how they can continue to access public spaces in a safe way. When providing information, we encourage owners/operators to consider providing alternative types of communications with consideration to those with visual and other impairments.

Local authorities are subject to the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality duty will apply to decisions relating to these measures.

■ **Wheelchairs: Coronavirus**

Robert Largan:

[\[61838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help local authorities to ensure that wheelchair users are able to safely access public spaces in the context of social distancing requirements.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We published the Safer Public Places Guidance to provide owners and operators with a framework to support social distancing in public places. This guidance reminds owners and operators of public spaces to consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics such as wheelchair users.

Owners and operators are advised to carefully consider social distancing guidelines in public spaces, emphasise the latest government advice on safety procedures to visitors and provide clear and concise information to the public on how to adhere to social distancing. This could include providing information on changes for disabled users and how they can continue to access public spaces in a safe way.

Local authorities are subject to the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality duty will apply to decisions relating to these measures.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Africa: Overseas Aid**

Stephen Doughty:

[\[63355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she has suspended any UK Official Development Assistance bilateral funding programmes in (a) Zimbabwe, (b) Zambia and (c) Tanzania since 1 March 2020; and what the value and purposes of those programmes was.

James Duddridge:

No UK Official Development Assistance bilateral programmes have been suspended since 1 March 2020 in Zimbabwe, Zambia or Tanzania.

Stephen Doughty:

[63356]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many UK programmes eligible for official development assistance support have been suspended in Africa since 1 March 2020.

James Duddridge:

One DFID programme in Africa has been suspended since 1 March 2020. This is the 'Promoting Learning in Agribusiness using New Technology Programme' in Nigeria.

More information about this programme can be found on the DFID DevTracker website <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300779>

■ Commonwealth Development Corporation

Stephen Doughty:

[63357]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what arrangements have been made to amend the (a) shareholding in, (b) ministerial oversight of and (c) parliamentary scrutiny of the Commonwealth Development Corporation since the Prime Minister's announcement on 16 June 2020; when those arrangements will come into force; and whether legislative change will be required.

James Duddridge:

The PM has launched a government-wide review of the UK's foreign, defence, security and development policy. As the UK's Development Finance institution, wholly owned by the Crown, CDC will be part and parcel of this integrated review. The Crown's shareholding in CDC is not expected to change. Ministerial oversight of CDC will continue to be exercised by the Secretary of State for International Development until September, at which time Ministerial oversight of CDC will pass to the Foreign Secretary as the Secretary of State responsible for the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. There will continue to be parliamentary scrutiny of CDC. It is not anticipated that the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will require any legislative changes in relation to CDC.

■ Department for International Development: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sarah Champion:

[64202]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the trade unions of the Department for International Development staff members (a) were consulted before the merger between those departments announcement and (b) will be consulted as part of the merger process.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There was no formal consultation with our trade unions (PCS and FDA) prior to this decision being made. We have now commenced discussions and they will have a key role to play as we develop the new organisation.

Sarah Champion:

[64205]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how the staff of the Department for International Development were notified of (a) the merger between that department and his Department and the (b) implications for their jobs of that merger.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

It is an important principle that announcement of a change such as this should be made by the PM in Parliament first. Staff were informed straight after the announcement. We will work closely with staff throughout the process of implementing the merger. Merging the departments will bring together the best of what we do in aid and diplomacy, and create new opportunities for staff. The ambition, vision and expertise of DFID staff will be at the heart of the new department – taking forward the work of UK aid, which will remain central to our mission. There will be no compulsory redundancies.

■ Department for International Development: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[63283]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, which Official Development Assistance programmes are targeted at supporting women and girls; and which Department those programmes are run by.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act, IDA), legally requires all overseas development funding to meaningfully consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality.

All ODA spend reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is screened against the gender equality policy marker and marked as 'principal' or 'significant.' This is a measurement of the proportion of aid that supports gender equality and women's empowerment.

HMG's spend on bilateral allocable activities targeting gender equality is made publicly available through the [OECD statistics portal](#). For example, in 2018 £4.9 billion of HMG's total bilateral spend was marked principal or significant (53%.) These are the latest figures available.

In order to ensure that our ODA spend is transparent, we publish details of international development programmes led by DFID, other government departments and partners on [DevTracker](#).

■ Department for International Development: Public Inquiries

Lee Anderson:

[62614]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will publish the (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory public inquiries being undertaken by her Department.

Wendy Morton:

DFID are not currently sponsoring any public inquiries.

■ **Department for International Development: Reorganisation**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[63278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether a cost assessment was completed prior to the announcement of the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Prime Minister has decided to merge the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, bringing together the best of what we do in aid and diplomacy. These changes will better align our development with our foreign policy and the broad UK national interest. It will make our development work even more effective and enable us to speak with one voice wherever we are in the world.

We will implement these changes in the most cost effective way possible. While we anticipate there may be cost savings in the long term as a result of using our resources more effectively and efficiently, it is not the primary goal of the merger of these two Departments. This is primarily about bringing together our international efforts so we can maximise the UK's influence around the world. By aligning our efforts, the merger will maximise our influence and expertise and ensure we are in the best position to confront the challenges that lie ahead.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[64277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Question 61560, on what day was she given formal notice of the merger of her Department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I am in regular contact with the Prime Minister and other ministers about how the UK allocates and spends ODA. Decisions on Machinery of Government changes are made by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister discussed the merger with both the Foreign Secretary and me ahead of his announcement in the House.

■ **Department for International Trade: Public Opinion**

Judith Cummins:

[\[62481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much his Department spent on (a) opinion polling and (b) focus groups in each month since January 2019.

Wendy Morton:

Between January and September 2019 the Department for International Development ran a nationally representative survey to assess the level of demand for sustainable investment practices at cost of £44,950. There was no other departmental budget spent on opinion polling or focus groups in the UK in 2019.

■ Developing Countries: Education

Anthony Mangnall:

[[62627](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on girls' education in developing countries.

Wendy Morton:

The COVID-19 crisis has removed 1.3 billion children - 650 million girls - from primary and secondary education, putting the most disadvantaged girls at risk of dropping out of school permanently. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls' education in developing countries is becoming increasingly clear. From a learning perspective, closures – even with mitigating actions - will significantly reduce learning hours. School closures in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis resulted in the loss of roughly 780 hours per pupil. We also understand that the effects of school closures in developing countries are much wider than reduced learning. For many disadvantaged children in developing countries, school closures expose them to increased hunger and malnutrition as well as increased risk of violence against women and girls.

The UK's response to the pandemic is two-fold, firstly to ensure preventative measures are taken to keep girls learning and returning to education, mitigating short term risks by focussing on safety, nutrition, wellbeing and the continuity of learning whilst schools are closed. Secondly, by supporting countries to protect and maintain their education budgets and ensuring that we build back better. DFID is adapting its bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. The Global Partnership for Education, to which the UK is the largest donor, is flexing over £200 million to support education sector stability in response to the pandemic. The UK has also announced £20 million for UNICEF's crisis appeal, which includes education, and a further £5 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund to support emergency education in fragile contexts.

■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

Anna McMorris:

[[63460](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the reallocation of responsibility over the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals following the merger of her Department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the SDGs will play an important role in collective approaches to post-COVID-19 recovery. Responsibility for the oversight of the SDGs will need to be considered in the round as part of the formation of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Notwithstanding this, all government departments have responsibility for the aspects of the SDGs that relate to their respective policy responsibilities.

■ Female Genital Mutilation

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[62628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to prevent female genital mutilation in countries overseas.

Wendy Morton:

The UK leads the world in our support to the Africa-led movement to end FGM. In 2018 we announced a £50 million UK aid package – the biggest single donor investment worldwide to date – to tackle this issue across the most-affected countries in Africa.

UK aid is continuing to support efforts to tackle FGM during the COVID-19 pandemic, including through increased remote working and using media platforms. For example, our £15 million programme in Sudan continues to support advocacy and in April we saw a significant step towards the outlawing of FGM in Sudan.

■ Gender: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[63280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government remains committed to her Department's strategic vision for gender equality policy; and whether that policy will inform the wider aims of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development department.

Wendy Morton:

The Strategic Vision for Gender Equality is DFID's guiding document on gender equality, but it reflects and responds to the UK Government ambitions on gender equality. DFID, FCO and other HMG teams already work closely together to realise the ambitions of the Strategic Vision. The Prime Minister has been clear that girls' education is a key priority for this Government.

As part of the merger discussions, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches. We do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), violence against women and girls (VAWG), women's political empowerment and women's economic empowerment are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[63284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether improving gender equality will be a priority for the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Wendy Morton:

Promoting gender equality and women's rights are a core part of this government's mission. We will continue to champion gender equality in international development because that's the only way we will create a fairer, safer and more prosperous world, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The FCO and DFID already work

closely together and share objectives on gender equality. The Prime Minister has been clear that girls' education is a key priority for this government.

The UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 makes a consideration of gender equality in all UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) a legal requirement. The Act puts our commitment to gender equality within ODA spend on a statutory footing and ensures that gender equality remains at the heart of our work.

■ Middle East: Coronavirus

Anna McMorris:

[\[63461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of increased numbers of covid-19 cases in (a) Iran, (b) Saudi Arabia, (c) Turkey and (d) Israel on the (i) health and (ii) humanitarian situation in fragile states that border those countries.

James Cleverly:

The Department for International Development is concerned by the continued high rates of COVID-19 cases in the Middle East region and is tracking the situation closely. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) data Iran and Turkey are the countries in the region with the highest infection and death rates. We are especially concerned by the situation in Yemen and Syria where the conflict in both countries, coupled with under-resourced health care facilities means the impacts are likely to be significant and the number of cases far higher than reported. This is why the UK has so far pledged £764 million of UK aid to end the coronavirus pandemic as quickly as possible. Countries in need in the Middle East including Yemen, Syria, Iran and the Occupied Palestinian Territories will benefit from this. This is in addition to other UK aid that has been flexed to support the response around the world, including the Middle East.

■ Nigeria: Religion

Ruth Jones:

[\[64326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will introduce mandatory training for her Department's staff in Nigeria on (a) patterns of discrimination and (b) conflict on grounds of religious characteristics and (c) how religion and religious actors interact with the societal context.

James Duddridge:

Our staff are encouraged to develop an understanding of religion and its role within society, including in conflict situations and in countries like Nigeria where religion is important to most people's identity. Specific training on religion is available to DFID staff through the FCO's Diplomatic Academy. DFID's cadre of Social Development Advisers specialise in understanding religious diversity and religious freedom and provide support across the DFID Nigeria office. In addition, our Nigerian local staff provide first-hand insight into the role of religion and religious actors within Nigerian

society, including conflicts affecting the country. DFID also use expertise from the FCO's Africa Research Group and conflict-prevention experts.

We are now working on an enhanced training offer related to religion as part of our commitment to implement the recommendations made in the Bishop of Truro's independent review. This work is being led by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rehman Chishti MP.

■ **Overseas Aid: Genito-Urinary Medicine**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[63281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what proportion of Official Development Assistance will be allocated to sexual and reproductive health and rights in the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Wendy Morton:

The UK government is committed to advancing and defending comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights and will continue to be a progressive voice on this issue.

Decisions on how UK aid is spent in the future will be for the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to make, informed by the outcomes of the Integrated Review.

■ **Violence: Gender**

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[62624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has to raise the matter of gender-based violence at the next meeting of the G7.

Wendy Morton:

COVID-19 has reinforced the urgency of the need to tackle the pervasive and endemic "shadow pandemic" of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence. We have been working closely with our G7 partners on this important agenda and will continue to do so.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Clothing: Bangladesh**

Stephen Timms:

[\[63203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations she has made to UK retailers who have not paid garment manufacturers in Bangladesh for products supplied during the covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

My Department is working across HM Government and with British retailers on this important issue.

There was a joint Ministerial meeting with the British Retail Consortium and its members on 21st May on the garment supply chains of British companies. Some of the topics for discussion included providing advice to businesses operating in Britain on how they can (a) support workers impacted by COVID-19; (b) support their supply chains in developing countries; and (c) meet their own duties to uphold rights and responsibilities overseas.

■ **Department for International Trade: Overseas Aid**

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[63293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department allocates Official Development Assistance to programmes that are targeted at supporting women and girls.

Greg Hands:

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act (IDA)) legally requires all overseas development funding to meaningfully consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality.

■ **Department for International Trade: Renewable Energy**

Sir Edward Davey: [\[60657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many (a) solar panels and (b) wind turbines her Department's buildings (a) have in 2020 and (b) had in each of the last five years.

Greg Hands:

The Department does not have any solar panels or wind turbines installed on its buildings and has not had any installed since its inception in 2016.

■ **Export Controls: Inspections**

Emily Thornberry: [\[63260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has undertaken compliance visits in relation to to monitor (a) Open Individual Export Licences and Open General Export Licences since March 2020.

Emily Thornberry: [\[63261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to ensure social distancing during compliance visits to monitor (a) Open Individual Export Licences and (b) Open General Export Licences during the covid-19 outbreak.

Emily Thornberry: [\[63262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many staff in her Department are employed to undertake carry out compliance visits in relation to (a) Open Individual Export Licences and (b) Open General Export Licences.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[63263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether staff in her Department employed to undertake compliance visits in relation to (a) Open Individual Export Licences and (b) Open General Export Licences have been redeployed to work on (i) the covid-19 outbreak and (ii) Free Trade Agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Department continues to undertake compliance checks. Due to coronavirus, physical site inspections have ceased temporarily and remote inspections are being completed instead.

We currently have eight staff who are employed to undertake such checks and there has been no redeployment of these staff to other functions.

■ Exports: Corruption

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[63445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many internal reports of suspicions of corruption have been made to UKEF's compliance Department in the last 12 months.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance's (UKEF's) Compliance Division has considered internal reports and referrals on around 40 transactions in the last 12 months. These do not always relate to active suspicions, however. UKEF has policies in place which require certain high-risk indicators and red flags to be referred to its Compliance Division for consideration and analysis.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[63446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many instances of suspected corruption or bribery UKEF has reported to law enforcement officials in the last 12 months.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) is not an investigatory body.

During the last twelve months UKEF has referred between 0 and 10 instances of suspected bribery to law enforcement officials.

The release of the exact numbers of businesses referred by UKEF to law enforcement authorities on suspicion of bribery or corruption may be likely to lead to the identification of an organisation, without any actual wrongdoing necessarily having been substantiated.

■ Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique

Clive Lewis: [63442]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the UK Export Finance Environmental, Social and Human Rights team assessed the Mozambique LNG Category A project.

Clive Lewis: [63443]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment UK Export Finance has made of the potential risks posed by (a) Islamic insurgency (b) demand for gas to (i) the Mozambique LNG Project and (ii) human rights in that region; and whether the Government will continue with that project.

Graham Stuart:

The Mozambique LNG Project is still under consideration, and we cannot comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

The Government has already published a Category A notice which includes a link to an Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment (ESHR) of the Mozambique LNG project and related information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/category-a-project-under-consideration-mozambique-lng-project/category-a-project-under-consideration-mozambique-lng-project>.

Clive Lewis: [63444]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment has UK Export Finance has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on (a) international gas markets on (b) the Mozambique LNG Project.

Graham Stuart:

The Mozambique LNG Project is still under consideration, and we cannot comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Any assessments that UK Export Finance (UKEF) makes of international gas markets are made in connection with projects it is considering.

■ Open Individual Export Licences: USA

Emily Thornberry: [63264]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to page 673 of the 2018 Strategic Export Controls Country Pivot Report, if she will publish all end user data associated with Open Individual Export Licence 16P to the USA (2008).

Emily Thornberry: [63265]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference page 673 of the 2018 Strategic Export Controls Country Pivot Report, if she will publish all end user conditions associated with Open Individual Export Licence 16P to the USA (2018).

Emily Thornberry:

[\[63266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to page 673 of the 2018 Strategic Export Controls Country Pivot Report, if she will publish the compliance record associated with Open Individual Export Licence 16P to the USA (2018).

Emily Thornberry:

[\[63267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many compliance visits have been undertaken in relation to Open Individual Export Licence 16P to the USA (2018).

Emily Thornberry:

[\[63268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to undertake an urgent compliance visit in relation to Open Individual Export Licence 16P to the USA (2018).

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The purpose of compliance visits is to get assurance that exporters holding open licences meet the terms and conditions of the licences they use. The frequency of compliance visits takes into account several factors, including the track record of compliance by the exporter and their previous compliance levels, the types of licences utilised and the knowledge and experience of the business in relation to export controls. We are satisfied that there is no need to undertake an urgent inspection at this time.

The Rt. Hon. Lady will know that standard end user conditions for all Open Individual Export Licences (OIELs) are available to view on GOV.UK and, under this licence, the exporter may only export to a government directly or companies using the listed goods in fulfilment of a government contract. Furthermore, export under this licence is restricted to the armed forces and the police.

Compliance records are commercially sensitive and therefore cannot be published, but I can confirm that a compliance visit has been undertaken in relation to this licence.

■ Renewable Energy: Exports

Alan Brown:

[\[63402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for her policies of the proposals by Scottish Renewables to export Scotland's renewable energy skills to countries which are seeking to undertake green economic recoveries from the covid-19 pandemic; and if she will make a statement.

Graham Stuart:

I welcome Scottish Renewables commitment to supporting Scottish businesses to export their knowledge, goods, and services to markets around the world. Trade will play an important role in delivering an economy that is stronger, cleaner, more sustainable, and more resilient across the UK after this crisis.

My Department has a team dedicated to supporting renewable energy exports and works closely with the Scottish enterprise agencies, for whom energy is a key sector. To support an international low carbon recovery, the UK Government recently announced the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to disburse £12 million, over two years, to projects that will help countries accelerate their low-carbon transition.

■ Riot Control Weapons: Export Controls

Emily Thornberry: [\[63257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Schedule 2 of the Export Control Order (2008), under which category are companies able to obtain a licence to export (a) tear gas and (b) pepper spray.

Emily Thornberry: [\[63258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to Schedule 2 of the Export Control Order (2008), under which category are companies able to obtain a licence to export (a) ammunition and (b) other munitions to deliver (i) tear gas and (ii) pepper spray.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The export control category for both tear gas and pepper spray is ML7.

The export control category for ammunition and other munitions, including that which could deliver tear gas and pepper spray, can be found under both ML3a and ML4a.

■ Trade Agreements: NHS

Margaret Greenwood: [\[64218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure the privatisation of NHS services is excluded from future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

As we set out in the negotiating objectives for a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America, published on 2nd March 2020, the NHS will not be on the table. The price the NHS pays for drugs will not be on the table. The services the NHS provides will not be on the table.

The United Kingdom's public services, including the NHS, are already protected by specific exclusions, exceptions and reservations in the trade agreements to which we are a party, and HM Government will continue to make sure that the same rigorous protections are included in future trade agreements.

■ Trade: Policy

Marco Longhi: [\[63521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will undertake a comprehensive review of UK trade policy once negotiations and continuity work with (a) the EU and (b) other international partners is complete.

Greg Hands:

The Government has ambitious goals for UK trade policy to maximise the opportunities of leaving the EU and overcoming the unprecedented economic challenge posed by COVID-19. We aim to have agreements with countries accounting for 80% of UK trade within the next three years. Our work to secure a trade agreement with the EU, and to replicate the effects of existing EU trade agreements with international partners, contributes to this ambition. My department reviews progress against these priorities on a regular basis and will continue to do so as agreements are completed.

JUSTICE**■ Courts: Coronavirus****Mr David Lammy:**[\[62277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether it remains his Department's policy to maintain virtual court hearings as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Chris Philp:

Audio and video technology has long played a role in the court room – they are not a new phenomenon. In response to the current pandemic, HMCTS have increased the capacity for telephone and video hearings so that participants can join hearings remotely where appropriate. Audio and video hearings provide an additional channel for progressing a case, and the decision to hold a hearing this way is for the judge, panel or magistrate, taking into account the needs of the parties and the nature of the hearing.

Our scaled-up audio and video capability includes more BT MeetMe teleconferencing accounts and the roll-out of virtual rooms, via a cloud video platform, to all jurisdictions. Separately, as part of the £1bn HMCTS reform programme, we are testing a bespoke video hearings service that will support court users before and during a hearing.

We will continue to provide options for the use of audio and video technology in hearings and their use will remain subject to judicial discretion.

Mr David Lammy:[\[62279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to convert empty public buildings into temporary courts to tackle the backlog of cases as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer of 16 June, to Question 56017.

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.

We are looking at a range of venues that may be appropriate. Any additional capacity will need to meet standards for safety and security and be compliant with Covid-19 public health guidance

Mr David Lammy: [\[62281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the covid-19 risk assessments for each building used by HMCTS.

Chris Philp:

Our [organisational risk assessment](#), which has been published on gov.uk, gives an overview of our assessment of risks across the organisation and details the safety measures in place. We constantly monitor the arrangements in all our buildings to ensure that they continue to meet the standards required - in doing this, we adopt a structured approach, using a local assessment tool.

Across HMCTS we have a range of workplaces with differing requirements and this provides a flexible framework for managers to effectively assess the risks and manage the safety measures for individual buildings. The tool helps to ensure that potential risks are constantly monitored, that swift action can be taken where necessary, and that anything significant that can't be resolved quickly at local level is promptly escalated.

The local assessments are dynamic documents that are updated regularly. It is important that we are always able to provide the most up to date information about the safety measures in place for any specific building. To this end, and to ensure that people have the most up to date information, we are not publishing local assessments online as they are rapidly changing. We are, however, providing electronic copies of them to court and tribunal users on request. We ask that requests are made locally, to individual sites across our estate.

Daisy Cooper: [\[62643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using performance venues and centres for the arts as additional courtroom spaces during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer of 16 June, to Question 56017.

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.

We are looking at a range of venues that may be appropriate, including performance venues and centres for the arts. Any additional capacity will need to meet standards for safety and security and be compliant with Covid-19 public health guidance.

■ Parole Board

Daisy Cooper:

[\[62716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to ensure the adequacy of the number of members of the Parole Board required to review the number of prisoners needing Parole Board authorisation for release.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice keeps the number of Parole Board Members under review to ensure there are sufficient members for it to conduct its vital work carrying out risk assessments to determine whether prisoners can be safely released into the community.

A recruitment campaign was launched on 8 June 2020 to recruit psychologist, psychiatrist and retired judicial members and there are plans to launch a recruitment campaign for independent members later this year.

■ Prison Sentences: Terrorism

Jim Shannon:

[\[62436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will hold discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on prison sentences for terrorism offences.

Lucy Frazer:

In the development of the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill there has been official and ministerial engagement with our Ministry of Justice counterparts in Northern Ireland's Department of Justice to discuss the breadth of the Bill's provisions, including prison sentences for terrorism offences.

We will continue this engagement throughout the Bill's progress and once it is enacted to ensure we have a consistent approach to managing terrorist offenders in the United Kingdom.

■ Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus

Beth Winter:

[\[63529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's document entitled End of Custody Temporary Release, how many prisoners have been released from custody to alleviate the spread of covid-19 in prisons since 7 April 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice has started publishing a weekly release of COVID-19 related statistics. This includes the number of prisoners that have been released from custody under COVID-19 early release schemes, including End of Custody Temporary Release.

The statistics release can be found here each Friday:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-covid-19-statistics>

■ Prisoners' Release: Females

Kate Green: [\[62433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions his Department has had with women's (a) organisations and (b) centres on the support that they can provide to women released from custody under the End of Custody Temporary Release Scheme.

Lucy Frazer:

The early release schemes were introduced as one element of a package of measures to create headroom to help contain the spread of coronavirus in prisons, alongside the creation of temporary accommodation and expediting of remand cases. This has enabled us to compartmentalise prisons to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. These measures have helped to contain the spread of the virus and limit deaths significantly, compared to initial estimates.

Measures were taken in April to release a number of pregnant women in custody and mothers and babies living in prison Mother and Baby Units (MBUs). These measures were discussed with those representing women's organisations, including the regional networks co-ordinated by Clinks, the umbrella body for organisations working with offenders, Women in Prison, Birth Companions and others.

An extra-ordinary meeting of the Advisory Board for Female Offenders, which includes representation from women's organisations and other external stakeholders, was held on 27 April 2020, and chaired by the Minister of State for Prisons and Probation.

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Women's Team has a single point of contact within Clinks for work relating to women and with whom they have established and maintained regular contact. This has enabled local and regional contacts with third sector providers to be established at pace and their details shared with practitioners in custody and the community to ensure women have access to appropriate support and assistance upon their release.

■ Prisoners' Release: Terrorism

Daisy Cooper: [\[62645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he will take to ensure that prisoners satisfy the release requirements set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill 2019-21.

Lucy Frazer:

The Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill will end early release for the most serious terrorist offenders.

The new 'Serious Terrorism Sentence' for the most serious and dangerous offenders will carry a minimum of 14 years to be spent in custody, with an extended licence period between 7 and 25 years. We are also ending early release for the most serious offenders who receive Extended Determinate Sentences – instead the whole custodial period will be served in prison and they will serve up to 10 years on licence.

For offenders sentenced under either of these provisions, they will not be considered by the Parole Board for discretionary release, meaning the prospect of early release for these offenders is removed. This sends a clear message that this Government treats this kind of offending incredibly seriously.

■ Prisons and Judiciary: Sexual Offences

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[63204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prison wardens, (b) probation officers, (c) prison governors, (d) judges and (e) magistrates have been dismissed for sexual harassment in each of the last five years.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of dismissals for the roles requested in each of the last five years is as follows:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Band 3-5 Prison Officers	3	3	4	4	4
Probation Officers	0	0	0	0	0
Prison Governors	0	0	0	0	0
Judges	0	0	0	0	0
Magistrates	0	0	0	0	0

MoJ treats allegations of sexual harassment seriously and has policies in place to ensure that they are fully investigated and appropriate action is taken.

■ Prisons: Rehabilitation

Daisy Cooper:

[\[62644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to ensure (a) the adequacy of resources allocated to rehabilitative courses and (b) that there is a sufficient number of tutors to deliver those courses throughout the prison estate in a timely manner.

Lucy Frazer:

Rehabilitation courses can mean a variety of activities, including Accredited offending behaviour programmes (OBPs) which are designed to change an individual's attitudes, thinking and behaviour for those who meet the specific criteria for access. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) reviews the OBPs and other activity provided across the estate on an annual basis and seeks to ensure courses meet the needs of the population. The level of investment has been maintained and each course has an agreed pool of facilitators depending on the type and volume of programmes to be run, for which the necessary funding is provided.

Due to COVID-19, a restricted regime has been in place in prisons in order to ensure the safety of both staff and prisoners. It has therefore not been possible to continue with many accredited programmes and other rehabilitative courses. However, we are now in a place where we are looking to restart programmes in a way that will ensure the health and safety of staff and offenders.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Kate Osamor: [\[62535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when First-Tier Social Security and Child Support tribunals will resume.

Kate Osamor: [\[62536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the current backlog is of employment and support allowance, universal credit and personal independence payment appeals.

Kate Osamor: [\[62537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of (a) employment and support allowance, (b) personal independence payment and (c) universal credit appeals being heard by tribunals virtually.

Chris Philp:

(1) Appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) have continued to be heard inline with government guidance throughout the pandemic. Face to face hearings have been replaced with telephone hearings and the use of other remote hearing technology to facilitate as many hearings as possible being held remotely. All parties to the hearings are being contacted directly to confirm the new hearing arrangements.

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

(2) The number of appeals which were ready to list ¹ for a hearing as at 31 March ² (the latest date for which data are available) was a) 4,832 for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) ³, (b) 23,134 for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) ⁴ and (c) 7,013 for Universal Credit (UC) ⁵.

(3) After a number of successful tests, arrangements are currently being made to introduce and make available Cloud Video Platform (CVP) hearings in all SSCS

Tribunal regions. The decision as to how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice. In considering the suitability of video/audio, judges will consider issues such as the benefit type under appeal, the nature of the matters at stake during the hearing and any issues the use of video/audio technology may present for participants in the hearing.

¹ The ready to list status could include those appeals where an earlier hearing had been adjourned (which may be directed by the judge for a variety of reasons, such as to seek further evidence), or after an earlier hearing date had been postponed (again, for a variety of reasons, often at the request of the appellant). An appeal may also have been decided at an earlier date by the First-tier Tribunal, only for the case to have gone on to the Upper Tribunal, to be returned once again to the First-tier for its final disposal.

² Latest data available in line with published statistics.

³ Includes Employment Support Allowance and Employment Support Allowance (Reassessments).

⁴ Personal Independence Payment (New Claim Appeals) which replaces Disability Living Allowance was introduced on 8 April 2013, also includes Personal Independence Claims (Reassessments).

⁵ Universal Credit was introduced on 29 April 2013 in selected areas of Greater Manchester and Cheshire, and has been gradually rolled out to the rest of the UK from October 2013.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing these data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and are the best data that are available. The data may differ slightly to that of the published statistics where data were run on a different date.

■ **Styal Prison: Health Services**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[62355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of barriers to access to healthcare for women prisoners at HMP Styal.

Lucy Frazer:

Healthcare in prisons is provided by specially trained medical staff, and prisoners are able to benefit from the same range of services as they would in the community. All women are seen by healthcare professionals on arrival, and can call upon their services as and when they require while at the prison. NHS England has made available additional investment for healthcare services at HMP Styal, and this includes commissioning an additional midwifery post to develop the perinatal pathways.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Procurement

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[63273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to support local specialist BAME voluntary and community organisations in accessing funding for resettlement and rehabilitation work through (a) the HMPPS dynamic framework and (b) alternative procurement routes.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[63274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether local specialist BAME voluntary and community organisations will be able to make joint bids for funding for resettlement and rehabilitation work through (a) the HMPPS dynamic framework and (b) alternative procurement routes.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[63275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how he plans to measure the extent of involvement of (a) voluntary and community organisations, (b) BAME voluntary and community organisations, (c) voluntary and community organisations serving areas smaller than PCC level but larger than local authority level, (d) voluntary and community organisations serving local authority-sized areas and (e) voluntary and community organisations serving sub-local authority-sized areas in (i) the HMPPS dynamic framework and (ii) alternative procurement routes under the planned new procurement model from June 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

As the Lord Chancellor set out in his statement to the House on 11 June, we want to see greater involvement by voluntary and specialist organisations in rehabilitation services, including by specialist BAME organisations. The Probation Services Dynamic Framework will allow the National Probation Service to directly commission rehabilitative services in a way that encourages the participation of a range of suppliers including voluntary and community organisations.

We are working with Clinks, the umbrella group for third sector organisations in criminal justice, to encourage the participation of BAME community organisations in the Dynamic Framework, including advice on forming bidding consortia.

We intend to assess the proportion of voluntary and community organisations delivering Dynamic Framework services on an annual basis as part of the Probation Reform Programme's benefits management strategy.

When using alternative procurement routes to the Dynamic Framework, the National Probation Service will have the same guidance on commissioning, including on reducing barriers to entry, and services procured will be subject to the same assessment for proportion of voluntary and community organisations delivering services.

■ Women's Prisons: Self-harm

Liz Saville Roberts:

[63447]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many incidents of self-harm have been recorded in women's prisons since 31 March 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

We publish data on the number of incidents of self-harm recorded across the prison estate as part of our Safety in Custody statistics. Figures for the period up to 31st March 2020 will be published on 30th July 2020.

The most recent quarterly figures (up to December 2019), showed an increase in self-harm incidents in women's prisons with 3243 incidents recorded, compared with 2995 incidents in the quarter up to September 2019.

The level of self-harm in women's is too high and we are determined to address this. Our women's estate psychology services (WEPS) have previously developed specialist interventions designed to support the most complex women within our care, and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic they have continued to support both staff and residents where it is safe to do so.

We are continuing to provide care and support to people at risk of self-harm or suicide through ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) case management. We have issued guidance to establishments during the pandemic so they can ensure that ACCT processes continue during the restricted regimes.

Across the prison estate, we have also given over 25,000 staff better training to spot and prevent self-harm and are investing an extra £2.75 billion to modernise prisons, combat drug use and improve the environment in which prisoners live.

As well as this, we have refreshed our partnership with the Samaritans which supports the excellent Listeners scheme, through which selected prisoners are trained to provide emotional support to their fellow prisoners.

■ Youth Offending Teams

Daisy Cooper:

[63505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing children receiving support from Youth Offending Teams to continue accessing this service until the age of 25, rather than being transitioned to the Probation Service at 18 years old.

Lucy Frazer:

This Government recognises that transitioning from youth offending services to adult probation services is a very important issue, and we are looking at how we can improve the process. We also recognise that young adults (18-25 year olds) have distinct needs which need to be addressed during this process. In general, the transition to adulthood presents a new range of challenges for young people, such as finding housing, employment and navigating the welfare system. The complexity of this can hinder a young person's desistance from crime.

We need to strike a balance between putting the right support in place for vulnerable young adults, and supporting them to engage independently with adult services, so that there is not another drop off in services at 25. We are committed to supporting young people transition from youth offending services to adult probation services so that they have the best opportunity to desist from criminal behaviour.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is working with Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) to review the Joint National Transition Protocol for Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and Probation in both England and Wales separately. This provides guidance to services supporting the transition of children to adult services once they reach age 18.

In addition, the YJB has been focussing on supporting the most effective transitioning of children into adult services, and for those services to recognise and meet the unique needs of this group. The YJB also identifies and disseminates emerging practice from the sector through a variety of channels including the Youth Justice Resource Hub

Officials in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) are also working in collaboration with the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and London Councils to review existing transition arrangements for young adults coming into contact with probation services in London.

In response to evidence that young adults continue psychosocial maturity and development well into their mid-twenties, a resource pack and screening tool is now available in prisons and some probation areas to assess and support young people whose maturity is still developing.

■ Youth Offending Teams: Speech and Language Therapy

Daisy Cooper:

[\[63506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of children being supported by Youth Offending Team services have (a) had a speech, language and communication assessment and (b) have access to specialist speech, language and communication support.

Lucy Frazer:

Although the Ministry of Justice does not centrally collect data on this, we are working to improve the outcomes for children with these needs.

Youth Offending Teams (which sit within local authorities) are at the forefront of working with vulnerable children. The Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Board have sought to build the knowledge of sector professionals in speech, language and communication needs. For example, the Youth Justice Board has worked with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to develop guidance for practitioners and managers in Youth Offending Teams. It has also created additional guidance for Youth Offending Teams in using the AssetPlus screening tool, to identify and analyse speech, language and communication concerns.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Office: Public Inquiries**

Lee Anderson: [\[62616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish the (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory public inquiries being undertaken by his Department.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Department is not currently undertaking any statutory or non-statutory public inquiries.

SCOTLAND**■ Coronavirus: Scotland**

Wendy Chamberlain: [\[63504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many discussions the Government has had with the Scottish Government in each month since the start of the covid-19 outbreak; and how many discussions in each month took place through Ministerial Implementation Groups.

Mr Alister Jack:

Scotland Office Ministers have regular engagement with Scottish Government Ministers, on a variety of matters in a range of subject areas and are happy to be approached by Scottish Ministers on further engagement. This is supplemented by official engagement between Scottish Government officials and officials in the department.

Scottish Government Ministers attended the vast majority of the UK Government's Ministerial Implementation Groups on the Economy, Health and the Public Sector. Supplemented by other Ministerial engagement, there have been more than 60 Ministerial meetings and extensive official engagement since March. Ministers from this department also attended those meetings.

My most recent meeting with Scottish Ministers was on Tuesday 23 June ahead of the PM's statement to the House of Commons. This was attended by, amongst others, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the First Minister of Scotland.

■ Personal Income: Scotland

Owen Thompson: [\[64254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the feasibility of devolving sufficient powers for the Scottish Government to undertake a national basic income experiment per the recommendations of Basic Income Scotland's Report on the feasibility of Scottish Citizens' Basic Income pilots published in June 2020.

Mr Alister Jack:

Since 2016, the Scottish Government have had the power to provide assistance for social security purposes in areas of devolved responsibility. Scotland has significant tax and welfare powers and can top-up existing benefits, pay discretionary payments and create entirely new benefits altogether.

The funding of the Scottish Government's social services programmes is entirely a matter for them out of the funds allocated to it for that purpose. Where the Scottish Government introduces a new policy which has expenditure implications it is for them to find the appropriate funding, including through their own tax raising powers where appropriate.

■ Scotland Office: Public Inquiries

Lee Anderson: [\[62620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will publish the (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory public inquiries being undertaken by his Department.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is not undertaking any (a) statutory or (b) non-statutory public inquiries.

■ Scotland Office: Public Opinion

Judith Cummins: [\[62478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how much his Department spent on (a) opinion polling and (b) focus groups in each month since January 2019.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has had no spend on (a) opinion polling or (b) focus groups in any month since January 2019.

■ Scotland Office: Telephone Services

Kirsten Oswald: [\[62489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what proportion of calls to his Department have gone unanswered in each of the last six months.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland does not have the facility to capture call data and therefore does not hold data on the proportion of unanswered calls.

■ Tourism: Scotland

Sir Edward Davey: [\[63218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on tourism to Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Alister Jack:

The impact of covid-19 on the tourism industry in Scotland, like many other sectors has of course been difficult. Tourism is one of Scotland's most important industries, building upon the UK's strong international reputation.

I am keen to support the tourism industry as the sector starts to get back to business. I have spoken regularly with Scottish tourism businesses and organisations over the past few months who have outlined their concerns and also their desire to reopen as this is the best way to stimulate economic recovery.

Tourism policy is devolved to the Scottish Government. However my office is in regular discussions with HMT and DCMS Ministers and officials to identify sectoral views in Scotland and areas of UK-wide support, and with Scottish Government colleagues to coordinate support to the sector.

The UK Government has provided a host of measures to support businesses and individuals through the crisis, including those in the tourism sector. This includes the recently extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Bounce Back Loans scheme. UK Government support to business has also included making an additional £2.3 billion available for the Scottish Government which it has used for parallel schemes, including grants.

Given the significant fall in the incidence of covid-19, and following the review from our scientific experts, the UK Government has taken cautious steps forward. I am encouraged that the Scottish Government are now moving to help businesses open our economy safely.

■ United Kingdom**Darren Henry:**[\[61827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he is taking to strengthen the Union.

Mr Alister Jack:

Strengthening the Union is my foremost priority and one which the Government is focussing on across the Board. As we have seen in our response to Covid-19, our collective ability to respond in times of crisis demonstrates the value of the Union. The UK Government has provided over £330 billion worth of government backed and guaranteed loans for the benefit of everyone across the UK. In addition, as a result of measures the UK Government is taking forward in England, the Scottish Government has received £3.8 billion in Barnett Consequentials to support businesses, charities, public services and citizens through the pandemic.

I welcome the fact that restrictions are now beginning to be eased in Scotland so that businesses can reopen to support economic recovery. In this key period, the UK Government will continue to focus its efforts on the economy to deliver a swift and forward-looking recovery. This Government is strongly committed to building partnership with industry and support improvements in productivity, employment, innovation and skills. I also see our City, Region and Growth Deals as a key part of

our economic recovery and am working to ensure that we can progress implementation of these deals across Scotland to support local economic growth and create jobs.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[\[61712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he had with representatives from (a) airlines and (b) airports before the introduction of the covid-19 quarantine restrictions.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State for Transport and I have held regular meetings with the aviation sector where self-isolation has been discussed.

Department for Transport officials have also engaged with the aviation sector on this issue and will continue to do so. This includes working with senior representatives from the aviation industry as part of the Aviation Restart and Recovery Expert Steering Group. This group serves as the working group for the International Aviation Taskforce – one of five sectoral taskforces announced by the Government on 13 May to support the development of guidelines for safely reopening businesses.

Officials have also held regular implementation meetings with the aviation sector prior to the introduction of self-isolation measures.

Beth Winter:

[\[63528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of the proposals in the Unite the Union report entitled UK Aviation: Flying into the Future; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The aviation sector is important to the UK economy and the government recognises the challenging times facing the sector as a result of COVID-19. The Department for Transport has kept an open dialogue with the aviation sector including unions, through engagement on both Ministerial and official levels.

Unite are members of the Department's International Aviation Taskforce's industry Expert Steering Group, established to bring together all interested parties to co-produce solutions to the issues facing the sector. The Group are best placed to identify and support what practical steps are required to restart the industry, as well as to consider what longer term steps are required to full-sector recovery.

Stella Creasy:

[\[64180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing an air bridge between the Netherlands and the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has announced that it has assessed the health measures at the UK border and as a result passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements in certain circumstances on arrival in the UK. This will apply to international rail, maritime, and aviation.

The Government will announce further details including a full list of the countries and territories from which arriving passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements later this week.

Sarah Olney:[\[64275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that airlines to meet their legal obligations to refund customers within seven days.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There have been no changes to consumer law, and airlines are expected to abide by this and honour consumer rights. We have been clear with industry that when consumers are entitled to a refund and ask for one, refunds must be paid, and the process should not be unduly difficult for consumers.

Airlines are expected to provide cash refunds to consumers who have requested one in a timely manner, but we recognise that this is placing unprecedented demand on their systems and processes, which means there are some delays in these refunds being processed.

The department is in regular conversation with UK airlines and wider membership bodies, and is working closely with the sector, the regulator and consumer groups to help ensure airlines deliver on their commitments. The Civil Aviation Authority are responsible for enforcing European Regulation 261/2004. Despite current pressures, they have also been clear that they expect airlines to continue to act in a way which best serves the interests of their customers.

■ Bus Services**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[64064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, on what date he next plans to meet with representatives from bus and coach operators.

Rachel Maclean:

Ministers and officials have had regular meetings with key stakeholders, including the Confederation for Passenger Transport, local transport authorities and transport operators in recent weeks to discuss a wide range of matters.

On 23 May, the Transport Secretary announced a further £254 million to help increase bus services across England as quickly as possible as we begin to re-open our economy. This is in addition to the £397 million the Government announced on 3 April 2020 to keep England's buses running to serve those who need to rely on them. The Government has launched an unprecedented set of support measures to ensure

that businesses, such as coach operators, have access to the funds they need to pay essential bills at this difficult time.

■ Driving: Licensing

Steve McCabe: [\[61660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to process (a) online and (b) postal applications to renew driving licenses.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services have continued to operate as normal throughout the pandemic. However, paper applications are taking longer to process as they must be dealt with in person.

This is because the DVLA currently has a reduced number of staff on-site to comply with social distancing requirements and ensure staff safety.

All photocard driving licences expiring between 1 February and 31 August have been extended by seven months. Drivers do not need to take any action as the extension is automatic.

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[63270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the DVLA are returning personal identification items to their owner in a timely fashion.

Rachel Maclean:

Paper applications which include identification documents are taking longer to process as they must be dealt with in person. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a reduced number of staff on-site to comply with social distancing requirements and ensure staff safety. Where possible, the DVLA is prioritising the return of identification documents that have been sent to them by customers.

■ Drownings

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[64288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the National Water Safety Forum's UK Drowning Prevention Strategy 2016-2026 and its target to halve the number drowning related deaths in the UK by 2026, what recent steps he has taken to reduce the number of drowning related deaths.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The members of the National Water Safety Forum all play a part in supporting the effort to halve accidental drownings in water by 2026. According to the latest data available, since the publication of the National Drowning Prevention Strategy in 2016, the annual total of accidental drownings has fallen from an average of 400 in the

years preceding 2016 to 228 deaths in 2019, a decrease of 43%. The average number of accidental drownings in the years 2016 to 2019 was 259.

Organisations such as the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Royal Life Saving Society and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents work collaboratively on safety campaigns and practical interventions to encourage personal responsibility for safety on or near water.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Testing**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[63221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has in place to enable commercial vehicles to undergo MOT testing; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The restart of heavy vehicle testing at scale was announced on 19 June to take effect from 4 July. Testing will initially be on a voluntary basis and Certificates of Temporary Exemption will still be available to manage the backlog of tests.

■ **Public Transport: Coronavirus**

Robert Langan:

[\[61839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help local authorities to ensure that visually impaired people are able to safely access public transport, in the context of social distancing requirements.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government remains as committed to delivering inclusive transport for all passengers as they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made clear to local authorities that the Public Sector Equality Duty still applies and that they must continue to consider the needs of disabled people.

Our expectation is that transport operators should continue to assist disabled passengers who need assistance, including those with sight loss. I made this clear in my open letter to the rail industry on 8 April 2020.

I am also meeting regularly with key disability stakeholders, including Guide Dogs, to hear directly from them about the experiences of disabled people using transport. This means we will be able to take action quickly if we find that passengers are not receiving the assistance to which they are entitled.

An accessible public realm is vital to enabling disabled people to access public transport. On 9 May the Department published statutory guidance to local authorities on reallocating road space which makes clear that authorities must consider the needs of disabled people and those with other protected characteristics when making changes to their transport networks. Public Sector Equality Duty requirements apply to temporary measures as they do to permanent ones.

Further, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for the owners and operators of urban centres to help social distancing, including at transport hubs.

Robert Largan:

[\[61840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that wheelchair users are able to safely access public transport, in the context of social distancing guidelines.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government remains as committed to delivering inclusive transport for all passengers as they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. We have made clear to local authorities that the Public Sector Equality Duty still applies and that they must continue to consider the needs of disabled people.

Our expectation is that transport operators should continue to assist disabled passengers who need assistance, including wheelchair users. I made this clear in my open letter to the rail industry on 8 April 2020.

I am also meeting regularly with key disability stakeholders, including Disability Rights UK, Scope and Transport for All, to hear directly from them about the experiences of disabled people using transport. This means we will be able to take action quickly if we find that passengers are not receiving the assistance to which they are entitled.

An accessible public realm is vital to enabling disabled people to access public transport. On 9 May the Department published statutory guidance to local authorities on reallocating road space which makes clear that authorities must consider the needs of disabled people and those with other protected characteristics when making changes to their transport networks. Public Sector Equality Duty requirements apply to temporary measures as they do to permanent ones.

Further, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for the owners and operators of urban centres to help social distancing, including at transport hubs.

■ Railway Signals

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[63464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress is being made in introducing electronic signalling across the railway network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is committed to rolling out digital technologies to modernise signalling on the railway. Through the East Coast Digital Programme, the Government is investing an initial £350 million to install new state-of-the-art signalling technology on trains and further develop the plan to digitise signalling on the East Coast Mainline. Network Rail's Long Term Deployment Plan sets out how the network could transition to digital signalling. As part of this plan, work is already

underway to prepare for the digitisation of sections of the network in East Anglia, and parts of the West Coast Mainline and Midland Mainline.

■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[61415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the condition on the additional funding to TfL that Government officials will attend TfL board meetings, whether his Department plans to appoint an external advisor to the board of each train operator with a franchise agreement with his Department.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has not appointed an external advisor to train operator boards and has no immediate plans to do so. The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) give the Department enhanced controls over financial decisions made by train operators. This includes a formal process of monthly budget reviews, allowing additional financial scrutiny of operators, with the ability for the Department to deem expenditure disallowable, in which case the train operator would have to bear the costs.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[63462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on the railway industry of reducing the two metres covid-19 social distancing guidance to one metre plus.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has engaged regularly with the railway industry to provide guidance and to understand the impact of any changes. This has included thorough discussion of changes to social distancing guidelines. It is important to recognise that railway capacity will still be highly constrained with one metre plus measures in place and we are continuing to ask the public to consider all other forms of transport before using public transport.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[63463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what financial support has been provided from the public purse to open access train operators in response to the impact of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government fully understands that open-access passenger operators are facing significant financial pressures and have temporarily ceased operations. The Government has already made available a wide range of substantial measures to support businesses across the economy, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which open access operators are using to provide themselves with significant support.

The Government is continuing to actively engage with open-access passenger operators on the specifics of their situations. We welcome their return to the network as soon as possible.

■ Roads: Accidents

Bill Wiggin: [\[63240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many road accidents involving potholes there were in Herefordshire in 2019.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department does not collect data on potholes in road accidents specifically.

Detailed final statistics on reported personal injury road accidents in Great Britain for 2019 will be published in September 2020. The latest annual published statistics are for 2018.

There were 2 reported personal injury road accidents where a contributory factor of 'poor or defective road surface' was reported in Herefordshire in 2018 .

■ Roads: Coronavirus

Andrew Gwynne: [\[63247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he plans to take in response to local authorities that do not follow Government statutory guidance on reallocating road space in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring any changes to their road networks are made with regard to the statutory Network Management Duty guidance published on 9 May. This sets out the steps Government expects local authorities to take to reallocate road space to cycling and walking in response to Covid-19. The Department is not responsible for policing what local authorities implement on their roads.

Alongside the guidance, the Department announced emergency active travel funding of £225 million, to help local authorities make changes to their roads to enable more walking and cycling, and to enable social distancing. Any bids for this funding that are not in line with the statutory guidance will not be granted.

■ Roads: Herefordshire

Bill Wiggin: [\[63241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timetable is for the widespread filling in of potholes on roads in Herefordshire.

Bill Wiggin: [\[63242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the prevalence of potholes on trade and commerce.

Rachel Maclean:

Potholes are a menace to all road users, including business. The Government announced in the Budget 2020, the Pothole Fund, which will help support local highway authorities repair potholes nationwide, including those in Herefordshire.

The Department for Transport is allocating £1.7 billion in 2020/21 financial year to local highway authorities in England, outside London, for local highways maintenance and this includes £500 million from the Pothole Fund. The Department is providing Herefordshire Council with £18.8 million this financial year and it is for the Council to decide on how this funding is utilised based on their highway asset management strategy, needs and priorities.

Whilst the Department has not made a specific assessment of the prevalence of potholes on trade and commerce, the Department is aware research into this area has highlighted the problem which potholes cause to business and commerce. This is a further example of why it is so important to tackle this issue, and why we are committed to funding pothole repair.

■ Trams: Coronavirus**Darren Henry:**[\[61829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to ensure tram services are able to operate in the (a) short, (b) medium and (c) long-term given the disruption caused by the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

On 24 April, the Department announced nearly £30 million to keep services running during lockdown, and a further £29 million on 23 May to help increase trams and light rail services in England, as we begin to restart our economy.

The Department will continue to work with the sector to understand how it can adapt to any 'new normal' that emerges from the Covid-19 outbreak so that a sustainable long-term recovery can be made.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Lisa Nandy:**[\[63327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the criteria used to assess the suitability of countries with which the UK plans to establish international travel corridors.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has announced that it has assessed the health measures at the UK border and as a result passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements in certain circumstances on arrival in the UK. This will apply to international rail, maritime, and aviation.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre, in close consultation with Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer, has developed a categorisation of countries and territories

from which it is considered to present a lower risk from a public health perspective for passengers to enter the UK, without a requirement for 14 days isolation. This has been informed by factors including the prevalence of coronavirus within the country and, crucially, the numbers of new cases and the potential trajectory in the coming weeks of the disease in the country. This categorisation will inform Ministerial decisions about the easing of the current border measures.

The Government will announce further details including a full list of the countries and territories from which arriving passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements later this week.

Lisa Nandy: [\[63328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, the Governments of which countries have been contacted by the Government to discuss the establishment of international travel corridors with the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government has announced that it has assessed the health measures at the UK border and as a result passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements in certain circumstances on arrival in the UK. This will apply to international rail, maritime, and aviation.

The Government will announce further details including a full list of the countries and territories from which arriving passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements later this week.

TREASURY

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Owen Thompson: [\[63437\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to reform Small Brewer relief in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury is currently reviewing Small Brewers Relief, and the conclusions of that review will be published in due course.

Owen Thompson: [\[63438\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the period in which brewers are able to pay beer duty as a result of the reduction in beer production levels during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

Brewers are currently required to pay their monthly beer duty bills by the twenty-fifth day of the following month.

However, if they require more flexibility regarding paying their beer duty bills, they can access HMRC's Time To Pay service. This allows brewers to defer their beer duty bills or pay over a longer period of time, if they need it.

Owen Thompson:

[63440]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reducing beer duty bills for all British-owned independent brewers to the rate paid in 2019-20 for the rest of the 2020-21 financial year.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury froze beer duty at the recent Budget. This means that the beer duty rate is the same in 2020-21 as in 2019-20. Thanks to decisions by this Government, the beer duty rate has been unchanged since 2017.

The Treasury keeps all taxes, including beer duty, under review.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Drew Hendry:

[63398]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions officials in his Department have had with the retail banking sector on (a) support for business customers who operated unsecured overdraft facilities for pre-planned expenditure and (b) transitioning these customers into alternative lending arrangements where their operations have been affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that the outbreak of COVID-19 may lead to businesses facing financial difficulty and uncertainty. In response, the Government has set out an unprecedented package of support for businesses, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs).

Under CBILS, borrowers can apply for finance facilities of up to £5 million from 95 accredited lenders. No interest or fees will be charged to the customer during the first 12 months. Under CLBILS, borrowers can apply for finance facilities of up to £200 million (subject to a cap of 25% of turnover). Overdraft facilities are available under both schemes. Bounce Back Loans are also available for the smallest businesses to access finance quickly. Businesses can access loans of up to £50,000, subject to a maximum of 25% of turnover, with no repayments due for the first 12 months. To date, these schemes have provided over £40bn finance to over 970,000 businesses. The Government continues to work with banks and other finance providers to help SMEs access the finance they need.

More broadly, many lenders are also offering support for their customers outside the Government-backed loans schemes, including through for example, repayment holidays and arranging fee-free overdraft extensions.

Claire Hanna:

[63533]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal support he plans to put in place for (a) businesses and (b) employees in the event that (i) there is a second wave of the covid-19 outbreak and (ii) there are regional covid-19 lockdowns as a result of that second wave.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, workers and businesses to protect against the current economic emergency

- In the Budget, we set out the first stage of the government's economic response, with £12bn of support to businesses, households and public services.
- We extended the support available to individuals and businesses, including a business rates holiday, grants to smaller businesses and a package of government-backed and guaranteed loans.
- We announced a package to help individuals affected by the crisis. This covered a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), as well as changes to our welfare system including Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay, making support quicker and easier to access, as well as more generous.
- Then on the 26 March we announced even more support to help the self-employed, with the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

So far, the CJRS has helped 1.1 million employers across the UK furlough 9.2 million jobs, while 2.6 million self-employed individuals had applied for grants worth £7.6 billion in total.

As the economy opens up and we look forward, we will consider how best to support the economic recovery.

Emma Hardy:

[64300]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to provide additional support to businesses which will not be allowed to reopen on 4 July 2020 as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency. Businesses which cannot reopen on 4 July will continue to have access to a range of support measures that the Government has already made available.

This includes, but is not limited to, the four government-backed loan schemes for firms of all sizes, and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The CJRS will continue to provide support to the end of October. The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible and how to apply - <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

The Government is following its COVID-19 recovery strategy, which was published on 11 May. The strategy sets out our plan for moving to the next phase of our response, alongside a cautious roadmap for easing existing measures in a safe and measured way. This roadmap is kept constantly under review, and we will continue to work hard to support business that have been unable to reopen through this transition period. Any announcements on the next stage of our economic response will be made at the appropriate time.

■ Business: Government Assistance

Stella Creasy:

[63332]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how HMRC determines whether a company is based in the UK in terms of eligibility for covid-19-related business support; and whether companies which have UK offices but are incorporated in the Cayman Islands are eligible for that support.

Jesse Norman:

The Government support package is targeted at the businesses and individuals who most need support, while ensuring measures are accessible, certain and introduced in a timely manner to protect livelihoods.

HMRC administer the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme (CSSPRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). The eligibility criteria vary between the schemes.

To claim under CJRS, the employer must have created and started a PAYE payroll scheme on or before 19 March 2020, be enrolled for PAYE online and have a UK bank account. They can only claim for furloughed employees where a Real Time Information (RTI) submission notifying payment in respect of that employee to HMRC was made on or before 19 March 2020. From 1 July, they can only claim for employees that have been furloughed for at least three consecutive weeks any time between 1 March and 30 June.

To claim under the CSSPRS the employer must have fewer than 250 employees before February 2020, be enrolled in a PAYE payroll scheme, and have an employee that was off work due to coronavirus, self-isolating, or shielding.

Self-employed individuals, including members of partnerships, are eligible for the SEISS if they have submitted their Income Tax Self-Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018-19, continued to trade, and have been adversely affected by COVID-19. To qualify, their self-employed trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to their non-trading income.

HMRC are also responsible for VAT and Income Tax Self Assessment, for which certain payments have been deferred. These are general measures which apply to all taxpayers liable to pay the taxes in question.

The schemes are designed to support both British businesses and workers in Britain who pay their taxes and would otherwise lose their jobs.

■ Business: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[\[63432\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC has provided advice to businesses in Northern Ireland on the additional processes that will be required for trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain once the Northern Ireland Protocol comes into force.

Jesse Norman:

The Northern Ireland Protocol is clear that Northern Ireland is, and will remain, part of the UK's customs territory. The Protocol allows the UK to maintain unfettered market access for goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, as is the case today. The Government has also set out that although there will be some limited additional processes for goods arriving in Northern Ireland, there will be no new physical customs infrastructure.

It is important that businesses understand how the Protocol will be implemented so they can make the necessary preparations for the end of the Transition Period. For that reason, the Government published a command paper on 20 May setting out the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol. Ministers and officials meet Northern Ireland businesses regularly to provide clarity on approach and to allow for detailed discussion of proposals. HMRC are also engaging with industry partners who need to put systems in place for customs processes and will be extending that engagement in the coming weeks to businesses across the UK affected by the Northern Ireland Protocol to support them in getting ready.

HMRC have published a questionnaire on GOV.UK to identify and aid businesses who move goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In due course, the Government will also set out more detailed plans for extensive HMRC support for businesses engaged in the limited additional processes, including providing access to facilitations to support the movement of goods.

■ Child Care Vouchers: Coronavirus

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[62485\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that parents are able to access the funds remaining in their Childcare Voucher accounts to help them support their children during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

As part of the country's ongoing response to the COVID-19 virus, the Government announced that childcare settings (including nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and wrap around childcare for school aged children) would close to everyone except children of critical workers and vulnerable children. As childcare settings gradually re-open, parents currently on the childcare vouchers scheme will be able to use their vouchers as a valid form of payment for eligible childcare services. The childcare vouchers scheme remains closed to new entrants, so parents not currently in the scheme should register for its successor, Tax-Free Childcare.

■ Companies: Finance

Mark Menzies:

[62398]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a dedicated long-term supply chain investment fund to support UK supply chain companies.

John Glen:

Ensuring that healthy businesses, especially SMEs, have enough working capital will be vital to our economic recovery. That is why the government has introduced a range of interventions to support firms directly. Including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), both of which target SMEs specifically. As of 21 June, over 920,000 facilities with a value of around £26bn and over 50,000 facilities worth £10.5bn have been approved under BBLs and CBILS respectively.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Stuart C McDonald:

[62484]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the number of firms using the furlough scheme towards the cost of redundancy payments.

Jesse Norman:

As per the latest updates to the guidance for the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme, grants cannot be used to substitute redundancy payments.

HMRC will continue to monitor businesses after the scheme has closed.

Full guidance can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

Mr Richard Holden:

[62662]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether grants under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme can be used to cover redundancy costs.

Jesse Norman:

As per the latest updates to the guidance for the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme, grants cannot be used to substitute redundancy payments.

HMRC will continue to monitor businesses after the scheme has closed.

Full guidance can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

Owen Thompson:

[64253]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what further steps he plans to take to support businesses experiencing significant cashflow problems to pay their staff after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme comes to an end.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced unprecedented support for business and workers to protect them against the current economic emergency. Businesses continue to have access to the Government's unprecedented package of support for business, including the four government-backed loan schemes for firms of all sizes to support their cashflow needs. The Business Support website provides further information about how businesses can access the support that has been made available, who is eligible and how to apply - <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>.

As we now begin to re-open the economy, it is right that state support is slowly reduced and the focus shifts to getting furloughed employees back to work. The changes made ensure we are doing this in a measured way to support both firms and employees through the transition.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the impacts of the support packages and continue to engage with businesses and representative groups. Any announcements on the next stage of our economic response will be made at the appropriate time.

Alex Norris:[\[64292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether an employer is entitled to make a claim under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for employees that are term time workers in relation to periods when schools are closed for reasons relating to Covid 19.

Jesse Norman:

Term time workers are eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme during periods when schools are closed for reasons unrelated to COVID-19, if they are otherwise eligible for the scheme.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors**Paul Blomfield:**[\[62419\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to extend the RTI Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme deadline for company directors on annual payroll schemes.

Jesse Norman:

As office holders, salaried company directors are eligible to be furloughed and receive support through this scheme.

Directors paid annually are eligible to claim, as long as they meet the relevant conditions. These include 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.

This requirement is important in order to protect taxpayers' money from fraudulent claims.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud

Stuart C McDonald:

[62483]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many reports of abuse of the furlough scheme the Government has received; and what progress he has made in investigating them.

Jesse Norman:

As of 19 June, HMRC have confirmed receipt of 3,351 allegations of fraud relating specifically to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. These have been assessed in line with HMRC's standard operating procedures for fraudulent allegations.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Staffordshire

Jonathan Gullis:

[62684]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate the Government has made of the number of grants provided through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC publish statistics on the total number of employments furloughed by local authority, including Stoke-on-Trent unitary authority and Staffordshire County. The latest statistics are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-june-2020>

■ Customs Officers: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[63435]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of (a) how long it takes to train a customs official and (b) the number of customs officials that (i) have been recruited and (ii) still need to be recruited for the purposes of operating the protocol in Northern Ireland.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have resource plans in place to enable them to meet their post-Transition Period requirements, including delivery of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

As a large department, HMRC use a combination of external recruitment and internal moves to fill vacancies, allowing for a strong blend of new and experienced staff and giving flexibility to allocate resource where and when it is needed.

For some roles, only on-the-job experience or training is required, whereas people in technical roles such as compliance undertake a rigorous and structured programme of learning. Many of these individuals have completed their technical training and are now consolidating that learning by working on "rest of the world" customs cases in preparation for the end of the Transition Period.

■ Disease Control: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[63311\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the financial effect on key workers who have had to self isolate on multiple occasions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The Government has committed to an unprecedented package to support individuals, including key workers, through this difficult time. This includes the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes, as well as through injecting an additional £8bn into the welfare system.

The Government has extended Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) so that employees can claim if they are required to self-isolate, including on multiple occasions, and the Government has changed the rules so that SSP is payable from day one rather than day four.

Many employees will be eligible for more than SSP. More than half of employees receive more than the statutory minimum when they are off sick, and the changes to SSP have been made in parallel with increases in the generosity of the welfare system to support the most vulnerable, including a £20 increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance.

■ Disguised Remuneration Loan Charge Review

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[63196\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Sir Amyas Morse's Review of the Loan Charge, what estimate he has made of the the number of people now due for a repayment of Voluntary Restitution relating to payroll loan schemes covered by the 2019 Loan Charge; and of those cases how many (a) companies and individuals have already entered into insolvency and (b) individuals are known to have sold a property in order to pay the Voluntary Restitution which will now be repaid.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[63197\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Sir Amyas Morse's Review of the Loan Charge, what estimate he has made of the (a) amount that HMRC will repay in Voluntary Restitutions in relation to payroll loan schemes covered by the 2019 Loan Charge already received, (b) number of employers that will receive a payment and (c) the value of the repayments received by employers.

Jesse Norman:

An estimated 1,000 individuals and 1,000 employers who have already settled their disguised remuneration liability will be due a repayment of voluntary restitution.

HMRC do not have estimates of the number who have entered insolvency or sold properties.

HMRC currently estimate that about £380m of voluntary restitution could be refunded to employers and individuals as a result of the change, with the vast majority estimated to be due to employers. The final value could depend on whether all eligible taxpayers claim their refund and whether, in line with the recommendation of the independent review accepted by the Government, refunds need to be reduced to prevent an unintended windfall, for example where an employer has enjoyed corporation tax relief on the voluntary restitution that they paid.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[63317\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to implement the recommendations contained in Sir Amyas Morse's Loan Charge review published in December 2019.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[63318\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether (a) income tax and (b) national insurance contributions have been deducted from income from loan schemes through third parties that were entered into before 9 December 2019.

Jesse Norman:

Disguised Remuneration (DR) schemes seek to avoid tax by paying users their earnings in the form of loans, usually via an offshore trust, so that neither Income Tax nor National Insurance Contributions are paid on the income channelled through the scheme.

The Loan Charge was designed to tackle DR tax avoidance schemes. The Independent Loan Charge Review led by Sir Amyas Morse assessed the impact of the policy on affected taxpayers and concluded that it was right for the Loan Charge to remain in force, and for the Government to seek to collect the tax due. However, the Review did also raise a number of concerns.

The Government accepted all but one of the recommendations made by the Review. The Government is currently legislating to implement these changes to the Loan Charge in the Finance Bill.

■ **Equitable Life Assurance Society: Compensation**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[62706\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure victims of the Equitable Life scandal receive their full entitlement of compensation.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[62707\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of payments made through the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[62708\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the data needed to make further payments to Equitable Life policyholders is retained.

John Glen:

There are no plans to reopen the Payment Scheme or review the £1.5 billion funding allocation previously made to it. The Equitable Life Payment Scheme closed to claims in 2015 and further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme>.

The methodology for calculating payments to Equitable Life policyholders was published in 2011 and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-design>.

Relevant records will be retained as long as it is legal to do so.

Financial Services: Personation**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[62401\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what guidance his Department has issued to (a) mortgage providers and (b) banks on the effect of identity theft on consumers of their products.

John Glen:

The Government takes fraud extremely seriously and recognises the devastating impact it can have on consumers and business.

Government is working to strengthen our systems for establishing identity so that serious and organised criminals are denied opportunities to exploit false or stolen personal data. This includes developing proposals for a digital identity system that would enable people to prove their identity easily and securely, without the need to provide physical documents, with the aim of reducing identity-enabled fraud and crime.

Firms are required by law to identify and verify their customer's identity when they establish a business relationship, for example, by offering a credit card. How firms verify their customers' identities is not stipulated in law or by the regulator. However, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) requires banks to maintain effective systems and controls to prevent the risk that they might be used to further financial crime. This includes controls to prevent fraud.

Government Assistance: Coronavirus**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[63483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister on 10 June 2020 Official Report, column 281, what progress the Government has made on providing support to newly shielding people who are not eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

On 22 June, the Prime Minister set out a series of steps to relax further the current public health guidance for those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable to shield

at home. This means from 1 August they will be able to return to work if they are unable to work from home, provided their workplace is COVID-safe.

The Government is asking employers to work with it in order to ease the transition back to a more normal way of life for their clinically extremely vulnerable employees. It is important that this group continue to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work from home where this is possible, including moving them to another role if required. Where this is not possible, those who have been shielding should be provided with the safest onsite roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the clinically extremely vulnerable will continue to have access to an unprecedented package of financial support. This is not limited to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, but also includes changes to Statutory Sick Pay to make it payable from day one, the introduction of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £8bn.

The Government will continue looking at what support is required for the clinically extremely vulnerable population as the public health guidance changes.

■ **Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates**

Marco Longhi:

[\[63522\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether short-term measures in the terms of reference of the Government's business rates review will be implemented at the end of the business rates holiday for retail and hospitality in April 2021.

Jesse Norman:

On 28 April, HM Treasury set out timelines for tax policy consultations in light of the current Covid-19 crisis. As set out in that update, the call for evidence for the fundamental review of business rates will be published in the coming months. This review will be comprehensive, including looking at potential changes that could be made with effect from 1 April 2021. Stakeholders will be invited to contribute their views and engage throughout the review.

■ **Hospitality Industry and Tourism: VAT**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[62377\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to reduce VAT on tourism and hospitality-related activities to 5 per cent.

Jesse Norman:

VAT raised £130 billion in 2019/2020. It is a major 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 announced 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.

■ National Income

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[64280\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish his assessments of the range of scenarios for gross national income in (a) 2020-21, (b) 2021-22 and (c) 2022-23.

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.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Mark Menzies: [\[62397\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the business rates holiday for the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors to the manufacturing sector.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure 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. As set out in the guidance, support is targeted at premises that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; for assembly and leisure; or as hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to determine eligibility for reliefs, having regard to guidance issued by the Government.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as manufacturers, has also been made available.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Coronavirus

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[63198\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the value of business rates relief allocated to UK supermarkets; whether supermarkets have experienced an (a) expansion or (b) contraction in retail revenue since the start of the covid-19 outbreak; and by what criteria are (i) supermarkets eligible and (ii) food and drink wholesalers not eligible for business rates relief.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[63199\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons business rates relief (a) has been granted to businesses in the hospitality sector and (b) has not been granted to food and drink wholesalers; what assessment has been made of the effect of this decision on the food and drink supplies of (i) hospitals and (ii) schools; and if he will discuss with Ministerial colleagues the applications of business rates relief to the food and drink wholesale sector.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief worth almost £10 billion to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure that are accessible to visiting members of the public, given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

Recent ONS figures show that, in the three months to May 2020, the volume of retail sales decreased by a record 12.8%, with declines across all stores except food and non-store retailing. The proportion spent online rose to the highest proportion on record in May 2020 at 33.4%.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as food and drink wholesalers, has also been made available.

■ Pepper spray: USA

Emily Thornberry:

[\[63269\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the value of exports of pepper spray to the US 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 pepper spray from other spring, air or gas guns or truncheons.

However, there is aggregated trade data available for the goods and periods requested on HMRC's uktradeinfo.com 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 all spring, air and gas guns and pistols and truncheons can be found using commodity code 9304000000.

■ Personal Income

Owen Thompson:

[\[64255\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with Cabinet colleagues on implementing a basic income to support the UK economy's recovery as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to helping families get through this crisis. The Government has announced a significant package of welfare measures to support those who need it most, including a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance.

The Government's approach to welfare is to recognise the value and importance of work, while protecting the most vulnerable in society. The Government considers that there are fundamental problems with the realities of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) and does not see it as an effective method of advancing social equality.

This is because a flat rate UBI does not take into account the additional needs and costs faced by some individuals. It therefore has the potential to increase inequality markedly. Any practical implementation would also be expensive, and would require a significant increase in taxation.

■ Public Sector Debt: Gifts and Endowments

Paul Maynard:

[\[62374\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what date the UK Debt Management Office created an online form to assist with cash gifts to the Donations and Bequests Account for the purposes of reducing the National Debt; how many gifts of what (a) individual and (b) combined value have been made using that form; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating an online payment facility to assist in making those gifts.

John Glen:

The statutory functions of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt (CRND) are carried out within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO). CRND's main function is the investment and management of government funds.

Section 8 of the National Debt Reduction Act 1823 created the Donations and Bequests account which, as its title implies, is used to handle donations and bequests from public-spirited members of the public for the purpose of reducing the National Debt.

Since the form was added to the DMO website on 15 May 2020, the account has received three donations for £20, £1,000 and £15 respectively, for a combined total of £1,035.00.

Historically, members of the public have occasionally made contributions to this account. Previously the process was by paper correspondence and cheque. The introduction of the form now provides an accessible method to make a cash donation to this account.

Details of the amount of historic donations can be found in the CRND combined receipts and payments accounts which are available on the DMO website via the following link

<https://www.dmo.gov.uk/publications/annual-reports-and-accounts/>

In considering whether to introduce an online payment facility, we would take into account set-up and running costs versus any likely increase in donations, alongside any customer due diligence, anti-money laundering and data protection concerns.

■ **Riot Control Weapons: Exports**

Emily Thornberry: [\[63256\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under what commodity code headings his Department registers UK exports of (a) tear gas and (b) pepper spray.

Jesse Norman:

The commodity code for both items is 93040000, which also provides for other arms; for example, spring, air or gas guns and pistols, and truncheons.

■ **Roads: Freight**

Louise Haigh: [\[64248\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions HMRC have held with business representatives on when the trialling of the new Goods Vehicle Movement Service for trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland will begin.

Jesse Norman:

It is important that businesses understand how the protocol will be implemented so that they can make the necessary preparations for the end of the Transition Period. For that reason, the Government published a command paper on 20 May setting out the UK's approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol. Ministers and officials are meeting Northern Ireland businesses regularly to provide clarity on approach and to allow for detailed discussion of proposals. HMRC are also engaging with industry partners who need to put systems in place for customs processes and will be extending that engagement in the coming weeks to businesses across the UK affected by the Northern Ireland Protocol to support them in getting ready.

To support the freight and logistics industry HMRC will be building a new optional IT system to facilitate the movement of goods. HMRC will continue to develop their systems in readiness for the end of the Transition Period and they are engaging with industry as plans develop.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus**Alec Shelbrooke:**[\[62395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he plans to make available to recently self-employed people who are ineligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme as a result of their 2018-19 self-assessment tax return including a one-off redundancy payment which HMRC classes as non-traded income.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading profits must be at least equal to their non-trading income, is designed to target those who most need it, and who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

If an individual is not eligible based on their 2018-19 Self Assessment return, HM Revenue & Customs will then look at their Self Assessment returns from 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 to determine their eligibility. This reduces the impact of one-off events, such as a redundancy payment, in determining eligibility. More detail is available at www.gov.uk/guidance/how-hmrc-works-out-total-income-and-trading-profits-for-the-self-employment-income-support-scheme#eligibility.

The first £30,000 of a termination payment is not chargeable to income tax and is therefore not included in the calculation of an individual's non-trading income. This further reduces the impact that a redundancy payment may have on eligibility for the SEISS.

Individuals who received more than half their income from non-trading sources in 2018-19 and did not have trading profits from earlier Self Assessment returns may still be eligible for other elements of the financial support provided by the Government. The SEISS is one element of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses, including Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[64291\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans the Government has to support self-employed people who do not qualify for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme or universal credit and who require financial support as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the written answer to Parliamentary Question 58596 given on 16 June 2020:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-11/58596/>

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Maternity Leave

Karin Smyth:

[\[64246\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his Department on the implications for Government policy of the amount of support through the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme self employed women on maternity leave can claim.

Jesse Norman:

As announced on 17 June, the Government is amending the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) eligibility conditions to support self-employed new parents.

This means self-employed parents will be able to claim grants if they were taking time out of their trade to care for their new-born or newly adopted child and, as a result, did not submit a Self-Assessment tax return for 2018-19 or their trading profits in 2018-19 were less than their non-trading income.

Further details of the change for self-employed parents will be set out at the start of July in published guidance.

■ Small Businesses: Beer

Grahame Morris:

[\[63310\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will he bring forward proposals to extend the business rates relief and grant support for pubs and the hospitality sector to include British-owned small independent breweries.

Jesse Norman:

The business rates holiday means that an estimated additional 350,000 properties used for retail, hospitality or leisure will pay no business rates in 2020-21, saving these businesses almost £10 billion.

Local Authorities can also choose to make discretionary grants through the Government's central discretionary fund, worth £617million, to businesses such as breweries if they feel there is a particular local economic need. To support pubs and breweries during this time, HMRC have made it easier to claim back the duty on any beer thrown away as a result of pub closures.

■ Stonegate Pubs: Government Assistance

Stella Creasy:

[\[63331\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Stonegate Pub company limited has received support under the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, (b) ability to defer VAT, (c) Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme and (d) Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has published aggregate application and approval figures on the loan schemes, including the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), and on VAT deferral, since 12 May, but does not hold specific information relating to individual organisations or companies which have accessed these schemes. These can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics#history>. The Government is actively considering what further data can be made available in the future.

The Bank of England is responsible for publishing data on the Covid-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF), including a list of organisations or companies who have made applications. This can be accessed here:

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/bank-of-england-market-operations-guide/results-and-usage-data>.

Finally, HMRC published Official Statistics for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) on 11 June, including a breakdown of sectoral recipients but not individual organisations or companies. These can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891249/Coronavirus_Job_Retention_Scheme_Statistics_June_2020.pdf

■ Taxation: Carers**Beth Winter:**[\[63530\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of not taxing the £500 payment for care workers announced by the Welsh Government.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs are working with the Welsh Government to understand the nature of the payments and the potential recipients. These details are required to determine the cost to the Exchequer.

Under the longstanding rules of income tax, any payments made in connection with an employment are chargeable to income tax and National Insurance contributions.

This is consistent with the Government's approach across different forms of financial support during COVID-19, including payments made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, which are liable to tax.

■ Taxation: Self-assessment**Giles Watling:**[\[61796\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has plans to extend the deadline of 31 October 2020 for Self Assessment paper tax returns for older people in residential care who are unable to access HMRC services online or complete paperwork

without support from family members, which is unavailable as a result of covid-19 social distancing measures.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have no plans currently to extend the deadline of 31 October 2020 for Self-Assessment paper returns for older people in residential care. However, HMRC will take a sympathetic view where the impact of COVID-19 on a person's personal circumstances has caused them to miss the filing deadline.

■ **Travel: Insurance Companies**

Chris Elmore:

[\[62546\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that travel insurance companies are (a) communicating clearly to their consumers and (b) treating them fairly.

John Glen:

The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector to understand and influence its contribution to handling this unprecedented situation.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) rules require insurers to handle claims fairly and promptly; provide reasonable guidance to help a policyholder make a claim; not reject a claim unreasonably; and settle claims promptly once settlement terms are agreed. In addition, the FCA has said that, in light of COVID-19, insurers must consider very carefully the needs of their customers and show flexibility in their treatment of them. The Government is working closely with the FCA to ensure that the rules are being upheld during this crisis and fully supports the regulator in its role.

The FCA have also issued guidance for travel insurance customers, which can be found on their website.

We have discussed with insurers the importance of insurance cover for Covid-19 in restoring consumer confidence to travel again. Firms assure us that they will look to offer cover again where and when they can. They are monitoring announcements by Government and reviewing their position as the situation evolves. We will continue to monitor this situation closely.

WALES

■ **National Assembly for Wales: Internet**

Nia Griffith:

[\[64121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, when his Department plans to update its website to change references to the National Assembly for Wales to Senedd Cymru - Welsh Parliament.

Simon Hart:

The UK Government in Wales website has referred to Senedd Cymru – Welsh Parliament in all new content since the name change took place in May 2020. There

is ongoing work to update older content on the site to reflect the new name of the devolved legislature for Wales.

■ Tourism: Wales

Sir Edward Davey: [\[63217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on tourism to Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Simon Hart:

I appreciate the huge impact Covid-19 has had on business owners and employees in the Welsh tourism sector, and have met with stakeholders across the industry to discuss concerns.

I am in regular discussions with the Welsh Government on the reopening of the tourism sector to ensure that Welsh businesses can make the most of this summer season. I wrote to the First Minister on 9 June on this issue. I welcome the Welsh Government's plans for a partial reopening of the tourism sector in July, and I will continue to urge them to do more to support this vital industry.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

Dawn Butler: [\[57924\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to tackle the adverse effect of covid-19 on members of BAME communities.

Kemi Badenoch:

Guided by medical and scientific expertise, the Government has implemented significant measures to reduce the spread of the virus in all communities, especially those who may be at higher risk. This includes targeted testing of occupations and groups at higher risk; guidance for NHS organisations on how to enhance their existing risk assessments particularly for potentially at-risk groups within their workforce; and translating the latest information into multiple languages and forms to meet accessibility needs.

In April, the Department for Health and Social Care commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to undertake a rapid review to understand how different factors have affected COVID-19 risk and outcomes. The report has some limitations - the ethnicity analyses did not, for example, adjust for factors such as co-morbidities. 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](https://www.gov.uk) on 4 June.

■ Ethnic Groups: Equality

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[[62637](#)]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to tackling inequalities experienced by the BAME community as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

Guided by medical and scientific expertise, the Government has implemented significant measures to reduce the spread of the virus in all communities, especially for people who may be at higher risk. This includes targeted testing of occupations and groups at higher risk; guidance for NHS organisations on how to enhance their existing risk assessments particularly for potentially at-risk groups within their workforce; and translating the latest information into multiple languages and forms to meet accessibility needs.

In addition to these measures, on 4 June as Minister for Equalities, I announced Government's next steps to address the disparities identified in the Public Health England (PHE) Report "COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes". The Minister will be working with the Race Disparity Unit (RDU) and the Department for Health and Social Care with support from officials across other departments and their agencies to carry forward this vital work. This includes reviewing the effectiveness and impact of current actions being undertaken by relevant government departments and their agencies to directly lessen disparities in infection and death rates of COVID-19.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Caroline Nokes:

[[903899](#)]

What steps her Department is taking to ensure that single parents are treated equitably within the benefits system during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

We've introduced an unprecedented package of support of over £6.5 billion to help all families to cope with the financial impact of Covid-19.

Single parents can benefit from the Flexible Support Fund and the increases to UC Standard Allowance, and Local Housing Allowance rates. Universal Credit is already more generous than legacy benefits, where people can claim up to 85% of childcare costs.

Our priority continues to be ensuring people get their benefit payments and providing support for those who need it the most.

Danny Kruger:

[[903906](#)]

What steps her Department is taking to promote opportunities for young people as the economy reopens as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mims Davies:

Jobcentres are already engaging now with new and existing claimants. Young people are at the heart of what we are developing, and we are listening to their experiences and ideas.

The department will continue to work with stakeholders, as we value their expertise, to make sure as the economy continues to opens up further young people have all the tools they need to thrive. We recently met with key stakeholders of the new Youth Employment Group, which includes Impetus, Prince's Trust, Youth Employment UK, the Institute for Employment Studies and the Youth Futures Foundation to discuss and co-produce solutions for young people in this recovery.

Jim Shannon:[\[903920\]](#)

What plans she has to review the equity of state pension ages for women.

Guy Opperman:

We committed in legislation to undertake a review of State Pension age every six years, which means that the statutory deadline for the publication of the next Government review is 2023.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the State Pension system protects current pensioners, is affordable, sustainable and fair to future tax payers.

Children: Maintenance**Munira Wilson:**[\[58094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the average time it takes for the Child Maintenance Service to respond to reports that an ex-partner of a claimant has stopped paying child maintenance.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 15 June 2020]: Where payments have been missed we have asked parents to report the changes via the self-service portal. Missed payments will continue to accrue as arrears and, over time, we will ensure that everyone pays or receives the right amount of child maintenance.

No one will get away with giving false information and those abusing the system will find themselves subject to the full extent of our enforcement powers.

Department for Work and Pensions: Universal Credit**Layla Moran:**[\[63476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) civil servants, (b) special advisers and (c) contract staff in her Department who claim universal credit.

Mims Davies:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave to question [28737](#) on 17 March 2020.

■ Employment: Young People

Cat Smith:

[\[64237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he is taking to ensure that non-graduate education leavers are supported to secure employment as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mims Davies:

We acknowledge that it is important that Jobcentres continue to support young people through the economic recovery. They have already started to re-engage with new and existing claimants.

DWP is also engaging with a number of external organisations including the Youth Employment Group (set up by Prince's Trust, Youth Employment UK, Institute for Employment Studies, Youth Futures Foundation and Impetus) as well as continuing to work across Whitehall to ensure a range of appropriate support aimed at young people including those from more complex backgrounds.

■ Housing Benefit: Social Rented Housing

Hywel Williams:

[\[63233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing her Department's spare room subsidy policy as part of the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

There are no current plans to amend the removal of the spare room subsidy policy in response to covid-19. The policy already allows for the provision of an additional bedroom in certain circumstances, such as to support the needs of disabled people as well as exempting households in receipt of pension age Housing Benefit.

If a claimant's ability to mitigate any shortfall between their housing support and rent has changed, Discretionary Housing Payments can be considered by their local authority. We announced last year an additional £40 million for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2020/21 in England and Wales.

Ben Lake:

[\[63458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the removal of the spare room subsidy on levels of household income.

Will Quince:

There has been no such assessment.

The policy allows for the provision of an additional bedroom in certain circumstances, such as to support the needs of disabled people as well as exempting households in receipt of pension age Housing Benefit.

If a claimant's ability to mitigate any shortfall between their housing support and rent has changed Discretionary Housing Payments can be considered by their local

authority. We announced last year an additional £40 million for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2020/21 in England and Wales

■ Personal Income

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[64215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what work her Department has undertaken to determine the feasibility of implementing a model of universal basic income throughout the UK.

Will Quince:

No work has been undertaken. Universal Basic Income is extremely expensive, reduces work incentives and does not target those most in need of support.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Stephen Timms: [\[62249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support is available for people who do not qualify for sick pay and who are required to self-isolate.

Stephen Timms: [\[62250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support is available for people who do not qualify for sick pay or universal credit and who are required to self-isolate.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 25 June 2020]: We have made changes so that Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance are payable to people who are self-isolating, including those who are shielding, and who satisfy the conditions of entitlement. We have removed the waiting days so these are paid from day one. Households may also be eligible for Universal Credit.

Alex Norris: [\[63467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of allocating additional funding to support to patients experiencing prolonged covid-19 symptoms.

Will Quince:

The Government has been clear with its commitment to support those affected in these difficult times and we have made a number of changes to the welfare system to ensure people are receiving the support they need. These changes include:

- making it easier to access benefits. Those applying for Contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who may have coronavirus, are self-isolating, or caring for a child (or qualifying young person) who falls into either of those categories, or individuals who have been advised to 'shield' because they are at high risk of severe illness, will be entitled from day 1 of their claim – as opposed to

day 8 - and we have removed the need for face-to-face assessments. Both Universal Credit (UC) and ESA can now be claimed online or by phone;

- increasing the standard allowance of UC by up to £1,040 this year;
- temporarily relaxing the application of the Minimum Income Floor for all self-employed claimants affected by COVID-19 to ensure that the self-employed can access UC at a more generous rate;
- making Statutory Sick Pay available from day 1 – as opposed to day 4 - where an eligible individual is sick or self-isolating; and
- increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for UC and Housing Benefit claimants so that it covers the lowest 30% of local market rents – which is on average £600 in people's pockets.

These steps form part of a wider package of measures which represent an investment of over £6.5 billion into the welfare system following the outbreak of COVID-19. 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.

We know that circumstances can change rapidly, and that was particularly true at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, which is why the Government will continue to keep the adequacy of its welfare response under review.

■ Social Security Benefits: Uprating

Ruth Jones:

[\[57361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to increase legacy benefits in line with recent increases in universal credit.

Will Quince:

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.

■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry:

[\[63397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the continuity of statutory sick pay payments for those individuals asked to continue to shielding beyond 1 August 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

The current epidemiological data shows the risk is currently low enough to allow the relaxation in guidance that we have outlined. From 1 August, the Government will further relax advice to those shielding, bringing it in line with the advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. In broad terms, this means that although the advice is still to stay at home as much as possible, those shielding may wish to go out to more places

and see more people, as long as they take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household and follow hygiene measures. This means that if they are unable to work from home but can work on site, they should do so, provided the business is COVID-safe. Therefore, clinically extremely vulnerable individuals will no longer be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay on the basis of being clinically extremely vulnerable.

The government expects employers to do the right thing to help their employees to transition back to work safely and support them to follow strict social distancing in the workplace where they cannot work from home.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, they will still be able to access a range of government support: this includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for employees who have previously been furloughed for a full three-week period prior to 30 June and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Guidance around shielding will be continually reviewed and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice. We will continue to assess the support in place should advice to shield be reinstated.

Background

- Employees will remain eligible for SSP if they are unable to work and are required to self-isolate because they, or someone in their household, has symptoms of COVID-19, or because they have been notified by the NHS or public health authorities that they have come into contact with someone who has coronavirus.
- SSP also remains available to those who are off sick for reasons other than coronavirus.
- SSP eligibility conditions apply.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ Palestinians: Refugees

Anna McMorris:

[\[43743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the need to increase the UK Government's contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to meet increased demand for core services for Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 May 2020. The correct answer should have been:

James Cleverly:

The UK is a long-term supporter of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Our funding helps provide education to more than 533,000 children (half of which are girls), health services for around 3.1 million Palestinian refugees, and social safety net assistance for around ~~271,000~~ **255,000** of the most vulnerable.

The services that UNRWA provide play a key role in helping contain and address the spread of COVID-19. We continue to monitor the situation closely and are working closely with UNRWA and the international community to ensure a co-ordinated response to the outbreak.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Alok Sharma):

[\[HCWS322\]](#)

The UK's world-class research and researchers play a vital role in delivering local and national economic prosperity but we recognise that some of that research is at risk from a range of income losses as a result of Covid-19. That is why the Government is announcing today a package to support universities to continue research and innovation activities.

Firstly, around £280 million government funding will be made available to universities and research organisations impacted by coronavirus for grant extensions. The first amounts will be made immediately available and will provide additional resource and flexibility to sustain grants funded through UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and the National Academies and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing them to continue developing existing ambitious and innovative research projects. This funding includes supporting researchers' salaries and other research costs such as laboratory equipment and fieldwork. UKRI will contact universities and research organisations with details of their grant extension allocation shortly.

Secondly, from the Autumn, Government will demonstrate its commitment to research by providing a package of support to research-active universities, consisting of low-interest loans with long pay-back periods, supplemented by a small amount of government grants. In sharing responsibility for the future of science and research with our world-leading university system the government will cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 20/21, up to the value of non-publicly funded research activity in that university.

We expect the level of support being provided to go a significant way to addressing reductions in research income. The second part of this package will be targeted towards sustaining research and innovation activity and capacity in universities across the UK. Universities will need to demonstrate that funding is being spent on research activity and on sustaining high quality research capacity and capability, with a particular emphasis on STEM research and areas of research typically funded by charities and businesses. This funding will be available to bolster those universities who are taking their own steps to make efficiencies, in line with the rest of the economy, to protect their research bases.

We recognise that universities will want to use this funding to protect areas of medical research that have been developed in part with support of charities. Charity-funded research has been a distinctive feature of the UK research system and a successful partnership with government through the charity element of QR. Now is the time to align that partnership as a more sustainable element of the research system.

The support made available to individual institutions through this second part of this package is subject to the conditions set out in the explanatory notes on GOV.UK and the final details of the proposal will be subject to business case approval. Government will develop the details of this support package, including further conditions, working with the sector over the weeks ahead.

Our research base helps to deliver higher levels of productivity and anchor R&D-intensive companies to the UK, and we will continue to be a welcoming and world class destination for international students and researchers, now and into the future. Government has already undertaken communications activity to promote UK higher education to international students, appointed Sir Steve Smith as the International Education Champion and introduced a range of visa flexibilities for current and prospective international students. This is all with a view to ensuring we maintain the UK's ability to attract students from all around the world.

Alongside this, DfE is continuing to work with BEIS, HMT and other government departments to develop a process through which Higher Education providers at risk of closure will be able to apply to government to access a restructuring regime as a last resort. Government will review providers' circumstances and assess the need for restructuring where there is a case to do so. Where action is required, this will come with attached conditions. The Government will work with the Devolved Administrations on this approach. More detail will be made available in due course.

EDUCATION

■ Capital Update

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson): [\[HCWS319\]](#)

Today, the government is announcing a transformative, ten-year school rebuilding programme as part of ambitious plans that will benefit schools and colleges across England.

Investing in our school and college buildings is vital to deliver the world-class education and training needed to get the country back on its feet.

We are committing to a ten-year, multi-wave rebuilding programme for schools. This will replace poor condition and ageing school buildings, with modern, energy efficient designs, transforming education for thousands of pupils.

We will start with 50 schools in the most need of repair, supported by over £1 billion in capital funding - with full details of these projects and the wider, long-term programme to be set out following the Spending Review. We expect construction on the first sites to begin from autumn 2021.

We're also providing £560 million of additional condition funding for the school system this year to help support essential maintenance projects. We will set out details of how this additional capital funding will be allocated shortly. This is on top of the £1.4 billion already provided for school maintenance in financial year 2020-21.

Part of the £1.4 billion funding for 2020-21 announced in April is provided through the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF), to support essential maintenance projects in schools across England. Today, I am announcing the outcome of the 2020-21 CIF bidding round. Over £434 million will fund 1,476 Condition Improvement Fund projects across 1,243 eligible academies, sixth form colleges and voluntary aided schools.

Details of today's CIF announcement are being sent to all CIF applicants and a list of successful projects will be published on GOV.UK. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

In March this year, the Chancellor announced that we are going to transform FE colleges across the country, investing £1.5 billion of new capital over the next five years, starting in 2021.

Today, we are announcing that the Department for Education will bring forward £200 million of this capital funding to this year. This will enable FE colleges in England to undertake immediate remedial work in this financial year to upgrade the condition of their buildings and estates. We will set out further plans on capital investment to upgrade the FE college estate in England in due course.

JUSTICE

■ Prisons update

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

[\[HCWS320\]](#)

My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has previously made clear his focus on tackling crime and last year announced investment of up to £2.5 billion to create 10,000 additional prison places that are decent, safe and secure and support the modernisation of the prison estate.

I am officially today, jointly with my Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay MP, reaffirming the government's commitment to building 10,000 additional prison places by announcing the funding and delivery of around 6,500 of these places through the construction of four new prisons which will provide a much-needed boost to the construction sector as it moves into a post COVID-19 world.

This work starts with Full Sutton, in East Yorkshire, where we already have outline planning permission for a new 1,440 place prison. Further work is underway to identify and secure sites for a further three new prisons which we anticipate will each comprise 1,680 places, subject to geographical and planning constraints.

Together, these four prisons will create around 65% of the 10,000 additional places and will build on the design and progress that we have already made at Wellingborough and Glen Parva as well as on the work we have done to ensure faster, cheaper and more efficient construction for public services, in particular using modern methods of construction.

This demonstrates a clear commitment from the government to the UK construction sector and its determination to help the country and the construction market get back on its feet following on from the COVID-19 pandemic by offering a clear pipeline of work and investment.

My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and I want to take this opportunity to thank constructors around the country for their commitment to keep construction sites open and operating and for their innovation enabling sites and associated activities to follow Public Health England (PHE) guidance and to adhere to social distancing measures.

The impact of COVID-19 on the construction sector has been felt both in the demand for new buildings and the ability to operate safely in line with government guidance. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) has felt this impact directly at the construction site for the new resettlement prison at Wellingborough in Northamptonshire. HMPPS has worked with suppliers, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that construction has continued safely. Workers are following PHE guidance and the Construction Leadership Council's Site Operating Procedures.

While no decisions have been made on who will operate these four new prisons, we maintain this government's commitment to a mixed market in custodial services, and it is our ambition that at least one of these new prisons will be operated by the public sector to support the modernisation of the public prison estate. We have previously announced that the operation of both our new prisons at Glen Parva and at Wellingborough will be competed via our Prison Operator Services Framework in shorter, targeted 'mini' competitions. Following a successful and robust evaluation of the bids received for the Wellingborough Operator Competition, we have a successful bidder, which will be announced soon.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Cabinet Committees

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):

[\[HCWS317\]](#)

Today I am publishing an updated Cabinet Committee list. I have placed a copy of the new list in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

■ Travel update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS321\]](#)

On 8 June, regulations came into force across the UK requiring people arriving into the UK from outside the common travel area to self-isolate for 14 days, with the exception of those on a short list of exemptions. These measures have contributed to keeping the

number of COVID-19 transmissions in the UK as low as possible, helping to protect us from a second wave of the virus.

Today I can confirm that the Government will shortly begin to ease the health measures at the UK border, allowing passengers to be exempted from self-isolation requirements in certain circumstances on arrival in the UK. This will apply to international rail, maritime, and aviation.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre, in close consultation with Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer, has developed a categorisation of countries and territories from which it is considered to present a lower risk from a public health perspective for passengers to enter the UK, without a requirement for 14 days' self-isolation. This has been informed by factors including the prevalence of coronavirus within the country and, crucially, the numbers of new cases and potential trajectory in the coming weeks of the disease in the country. This categorisation will inform Ministerial decisions about the easing of the current border measures.

I will announce further details including a full list of the countries and territories from which arriving passengers will be exempted from self-isolation requirements later this week. Although people will not need to self-isolate after entering the UK from these countries, they must not be complacent about following the public health advice on hand hygiene and social distancing.

Separately, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is reviewing its travel advice. Further details will be announced later this week.

Throughout this process public safety has been at the heart of our decision making. We have been guided by the science and worked closely with health and policy experts from across government to ensure the steps we are taking are gradual and will minimise the risk of new COVID-19 cases while helping to open our travel and tourism sector.

WALES

■ Contingencies Fund Advance

Secretary of State for Wales (Simon Hart):

[\[HCWS318\]](#)

I hereby give notice of the Wales Office's intention to seek an advance from the Contingencies Fund. The department requires an advance to meet an urgent cash requirement pending parliamentary approval of the Main Estimates 2020-21.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, over £1.8bn of additional funding is included in the Main Estimate for the Welsh Government as a result of consequential derived from announcements by the UK Government. The Vote on Account cash limit for 2020-21 is insufficient to meet the additional spending need of the Welsh Government in the period prior to approval of the Main Estimates 2020-21.

Parliamentary approval for additional non-budget expenditure of £856,557,000 has been sought in a Main Estimate for the Wales Office. Pending that approval, urgent

expenditure estimated at £856,557,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The advance will be repaid immediately following Royal Assent of the Supply and Appropriation Bill in July.