



## Daily Report

Friday, 3 July 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 3 July 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:27 P.M., 03 July 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Cars

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will take steps to introduce a car scrappage schemes for (a) old and (b) polluting vehicles.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is investing a total of £2.5 billion to support consumers to make the transition to zero emission vehicles. We have no current plans to introduce a scrappage scheme.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ Internet: Linlithgow and East Falkirk

**Martyn Day:**

[\[54168\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people in Linlithgow and East Falkirk who are unable to access the internet are not (a) disadvantaged as consumers and (b) denied access to government services.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government is committed to making sure that our online services are accessible to all citizens, and that an appropriate alternative channel is available where citizens are not online.

The Government offers support to those who need “assisted digital support” to use digital by default public services.

#### ■ Rape

**Jackie Doyle-Price:**

[\[64904\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of women and girls who have been victims of rape between the ages of (i) 12-70, (ii) 12-50, (iii) 12-25 and (iv) 12-18.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA Response [PQ64904.pdf]

**■ Visas**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[59689\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Answer of 5 May 2020 to Question HL3246, what progress he has made in negotiations with the EU on future mobility arrangements.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[59690\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the UK is seeking to negotiate with the EU reciprocal visa free travel for the purposes of tourism after the transition period.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

I refer the Rt. Hon. Member to the answer given to PQ [48438](#) on 2 June 2020.

**DEFENCE****■ Defence and Aerospace industry**

**Ruth Jones:** [\[64336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the defence and military aerospace industry of reaching the end of the transition period without a deal with the EU.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The United Kingdom left the EU with a deal on the 31 January 2020. We are willing to negotiate a comprehensive free trade deal and to this end have agreed an intensified talks process throughout July.

Planning for the end of the transition period is well underway – coordinated by the Cabinet Office and informed by dialogue with the defence sector.

**■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement**

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[65088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of the unit procurement cost for the F-35B following the reduction in the number of those aircraft procured by the United State Marine Corps; and what the current unit procurement cost is for the F-35B.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The UK's first aircraft was delivered in 2012 for \$161 million; today, the Lot 11 cost of an F-35B is \$115.5 million. Future Lots will be subject to commercial negotiation.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Overseas Aid**

**John Healey:** [\[64851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to assess whether reductions to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by his Department would threaten

the security of (a) British assets overseas, and (b) individuals, groups and communities who are beneficiaries of the ODA spend by his Department.

**James Heappey:**

No decisions have been taken on reducing the Ministry of Defence's share of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget. ODA represents a very small proportion of the Defence budget, and adjustments to the ODA budget would not pose a threat to UK or international security.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Bowling: Coronavirus

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[66187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what consultation his Department undertook with representatives from tenpin bowling (a) operators and (b) organisations on the decision to keep that sector closed when the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased on 4 July 2020.

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[66188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what his timescale is for informing representatives of tenpin bowling operators of (a) the requirements they must meet to be permitted to safely re-open to the public and (b) how those operators submit proposals to Government for approval of meeting those requirements.

**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 leisure facilities including Bowling Alleys as soon as it is safe to do so. 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.

### ■ Gyms and Leisure: Coronavirus

**Alison McGovern:**

[\[66050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish a timetable for the reopening of indoor leisure facilities and gyms during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alison McGovern:**[\[66051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who he has had discussions with in the sports sector on the reopening of indoor leisure facilities and gyms during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alison McGovern:**[\[66052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions officials of his Department had with representatives of gyms and indoor leisure facilities on the decision not to re-open those facilities on 4 July 2020 as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Alison McGovern:**[\[66053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what scientific evidence his Department based its decision to delay the re-opening of indoor leisure facilities 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 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.

## ■ Music: Coronavirus

**Tracy Brabin:**[\[66155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recommendation that premises should ensure that steps are taken to avoid people unduly raising their voices in the Government guidance on working safely during coronavirus, published on 24 June, what assessment the Government has made of whether singing carries an increased risk of transmission of covid-19; and what scientific evidence was used in that assessment.

**Caroline Dineneage:**

Current Public Health England assessment is that singing carries a potential higher risk of transmission and that participation in this activity requires particular attention to the risk involved. Based on this, Government guidance proposes a precautionary risk-based approach to certain activities and aims to develop the ways activities can be carried out as the evidence base is better understood.



To help support the development of the evidence base in regards to singing, DCMS is engaged in a number of scientific activities focusing on the need to understand the different risks associated with singing, brass and woodwind. DCMS is working closely with SAGE and a number of specialists in aerosol transmission and ventilation, who will focus on a number of critical research questions. These groups will be examining existing and emerging evidence to provide advice to guide the future development of policy and guidelines.

## ■ Swimming

**Jane Hunt:**

[\[63544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the research entitled, Value of Swimming, published by Swim England.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Regular exercise has been shown to treat, manage and prevent a number of physical and mental health conditions and I recognise the role swimming plays in this. The Value of Swimming report helpfully sets out the value of swimming to individuals and society.

The Government is committed to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so and I welcome the work Swim England are doing with the sector to produce guidance on the re-opening of swimming pools. 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

## EDUCATION

## ■ Apprentices

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[64240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which organisations his Department has met with to discuss the Government's forthcoming apprenticeship guarantee.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Apprenticeships will have an important role to play in creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people, and in supporting employers in all sectors to access the skilled workforce they need to recover and grow following the COVID-19 outbreak. We are looking to support employers of all sizes, and particularly smaller businesses, to take on new apprentices this year. We will set out further details in due course. We will also ensure that there is sufficient funding to support small businesses who want to take on an apprentice this year.

Ministers and officials continue to work closely with business representative organisations including the Confederation of Business Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses, Make UK, the Institute of Directors and British Chambers of

Commerce. Ministers and officials are also working closely with other governmental departments including HM Treasury, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on economic recovery and the role of apprenticeships and other skills programmes.

In my role as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, I have held many conversations with employers and training providers, in addition to recently hosting two cross-sectoral employer roundtables. These roundtables were used to gain insight into their experiences of the impact of COVID-19 and the government's response, and to share their ideas as to how apprenticeships can drive economic recovery and continue to be an accessible, high-quality route to employment and skills. Employers in attendance covered a diverse spectrum of the economy, including retail, manufacturing, construction, digital, creative arts and the public sector. I was also pleased to recently meet a broad range of members of the Federation of Industry Sector Skills & Standards to consider key skills shortages in different sectors and how COVID-19 has impacted these.

**Karin Smyth:**

**[64957]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the merits of providing apprenticeships programmes that are more affordable to the NHS and the opportunities this might offer local economies.

**Gillian Keegan:**

Nursing apprenticeships offer a high-quality work-based route, in addition to the established higher education route, into the profession. There is now a complete apprentice pathway from entry-level through to postgraduate-level. We are working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Health Education England to try to maximise the potential of this route to deliver trained nurses and nursing associates to the NHS.

Apprenticeships are able to help meet the long-term skills needs of a changing NHS and to widen access to the professions. There are currently 65 standards available for delivery from levels 2 to 7 in the health and science route. There are over 550 standards available overall, many of which can be used in the healthcare sector.

We are committed to minimising disruption to nurses' training while supporting the NHS to deal with the challenges of COVID-19. Nursing apprentices who have completed their programme and passed through the apprenticeship gateway will be regarded to have met the end-point assessment requirements and achieved their apprenticeship.

We work closely with Health Education England, who have established a dedicated team of relationship managers to provide bespoke support to trusts. We continue to engage regularly with NHS stakeholders, including Health Education England and NHS Employers, to make sure that the NHS is fully supported to recruit the apprentices that it needs to deliver high-quality care in all areas, including emergency services, nursing, and care. I was pleased to speak recently to apprentices at the

Yorkshire Air Ambulance, who shared with me their inspiring stories of how apprenticeships have allowed the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to do its vital work in supporting the NHS.

## ■ Apprentices: Taxation

**Karin Smyth:**

[\[64241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to review the apprenticeships levy; and what progress he has made on that review.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The government is committed to improving the working of the apprenticeship levy. We are continuing to engage closely with businesses and to listen to their views about the operation of the levy and the apprenticeships programme more broadly, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have already introduced the flexibility for levy-payers to transfer up to 25% of their funds, enabling them to support apprenticeship starts in their supply chains or to meet local skills needs. In response to the outbreak, we have introduced a range of flexibilities to enable apprentices and employers to continue with their apprenticeships and start new ones wherever possible. This includes encouraging the remote delivery of training and allowing changes to end point assessment.

We are also bringing non-levy paying employers onto the apprenticeship service during 2020-21 to give smaller employers more control over the apprenticeships they choose and the training providers they use.

## ■ Children and Young People: Physical Education and Sports

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[64120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the role of PE and school sport in promoting mental wellbeing among children and young people.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department recognises there are well established links between physical activity, improved mental wellbeing and educational attainment.

The Government's School Sport and Activity Action Plan set out a range of measures to ensure that all children have access to high quality PE and sport sessions during the school week and opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day, to help them do the 60 minutes a day of physical exercise recommended by the UK Chief Medical Officers.

While schools have been closed to some pupils the Government has taken steps to support those who have had restricted opportunity to exercise while at home to support their physical and mental wellbeing. As part of its guidance on remote education provision, the Department has published online educational resources approved by subject experts for schools and parents to help children to take part in PE and physical activity. In addition, Sport England have free online content to help

children and their families to become active at home through their Join the Movement campaign.

The Department is working to ensure that schools are fully supported as they welcome more children back to school and schools are able to give pupils opportunities to take part in physical education and be physically active during the school day.

## ■ Children: Cycling and Walking

**Geraint Davies:**

[64050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of (a) walking and (b) cycling to school on children's health.

**Nick Gibb:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote sustainable school travel. The Department's guidance sets out that this duty should have a broad impact, including providing health benefits for children, and their families, through active journeys, such as walking and cycling; as well as improvements in air quality to which children are particularly vulnerable.

Government advice, particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak, is to walk or cycle to school where possible. This will not only help reduce the spread of infection and reduce demand on public transport, but also have enormous benefits for children's health.

The Department for Transport's cycling and walking investment strategy sets out the Government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. Details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>.

On 9 May the Department for Transport announced a £2 billion package to create new era for cycling and walking: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>.

## ■ Eleven Plus: Coronavirus

**Greg Smith:**

[64361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of disruption to education as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on the timetabling of 11 plus examinations in 2020; and if he will issue new guidance to admissions authorities to enable 11 plus examinations to be rescheduled in 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

Arrangements for selecting pupils by ability are for the admission authorities of selective schools to decide. We are working with the sector and intend to publish advice on the impact of COVID-19 on testing arrangements for admissions to selective schools shortly.

## ■ Exercise and Sports: Coronavirus

**Ben Bradley:**

[64318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to issue guidance on the provision of sport and exercise in the covid-19 catch-up plan.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is working to ensure that schools are fully supported as they welcome more children back to school and schools are able to give pupils opportunities to take part in physical education and be physically active during the school day. Schools are free to organise and deliver a PE curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils whilst following COVID-19 government guidelines. The Department has now published guidance on plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education from September, which covers the provision of PE and school sport: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The Department has made £650 million available to state-funded schools to support pupils to catch-up following extended school closure. The Education Endowment Foundation has published guidance to encourage schools to use this funding on evidence-led interventions, one of which might be summer catch-up activity. It is a matter for schools to decide how to spend the funding, based on their individual circumstances and brokering local partnerships with Voluntary and Community Sector organisation and other organisations to help them deliver. Precise details of how the catch up premium will be delivered will be confirmed shortly and we will confirm the timetable for publishing institution-level allocations in due course.

## ■ Higher Education: Finance

**Emma Hardy:**

[62570]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department made of the social intake of higher education institutions and the communities they serve when setting the specific values of the continuation rate and the skilled employment/further study rate as minimum qualifying thresholds for institutions to bid for funding for 5,000 non-health care places.

**Emma Hardy:**

[62571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has undertaken an equalities impact assessment when arriving at the values of a continuation rate of  $\geq 90$  per cent and a skilled employment/further study rate of  $\geq 75$  per cent as minimum qualifying thresholds for higher education establishments to bid for funding for 5,000 non-health care places.

**Michelle Donelan:**

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, gave consideration to a wide range of factors when setting out the eligibility criteria for the extra non-healthcare places. This included the need to ensure that these places lead to

completed qualifications and entry into the professions in which we need more people so we can support our vital public services and add value to the economy. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and the other equality aims under the Equality Act (2010) when formulating the policy on student number controls (SNCs). Admitting students, including disadvantaged students, to low quality courses which do not give them the support they need to complete their degree, or do not give them good access to graduate employment, is not in the interest of students.

Overall, SNCs allow for substantial growth across the sector – they allow for all provider forecasts of growth and another 5% growth above this. Every individual provider in the country can recruit at least 6.5% more students than in the last academic year. The extra places that my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education can award, are in addition to this already generous allowance.

SNCs will, however, re-distribute students more equally across different higher education providers compared to what would likely occur in the absence of any quantitative limits on student numbers at individual providers. Providers in the medium and low tariff groups are expected to be the main beneficiaries from SNCs as they are most likely to feel the greatest pressure on recruitment.

Our overarching aim is to protect students and to allow all students who want to go to university, and who meet their entry requirements, to access higher education.

#### ■ Internet: Safety

**Damian Hinds:** [\[64889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the level of preparedness of schools for the provision of mandatory relationships, sex and health education from September 2020.

**Damian Hinds:** [\[64890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the availability of effective teaching materials to support the guidance entitled, Teaching online safety in school guidance – supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects.

**Damian Hinds:** [\[64891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to review the guidance entitled, Teaching online safety in school Guidance – supporting schools to teach their pupils how to stay safe online, within new and existing school subjects, before September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to supporting schools to deliver high quality teaching of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education.

In light of the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, and following engagement with the sector, the Department is reassuring schools that although the

subjects will still be compulsory from 1 September 2020, schools have flexibility over how they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching. For further information, I refer my right hon. Friend, the Member for East Hampshire to the answer I gave on 5 June to Question [55660](#).

The Department has worked extensively with schools, teachers and experts throughout the development of these subjects. This has included over 150 interviews and multiple surveys which informed our support programme to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice in these subjects.

The support programme will include online training modules to enable subject leads to train non-specialist teachers in their schools, an implementation guide, and case studies from early adopter schools. This support will cover all of the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and will be inclusive to all pupils. The first training module for teachers, covering mental wellbeing, is now available on GOV.UK, and additional content, including teacher training modules covering online safety, internet harms and media literacy will be added in the coming months.

Regarding the review of the teaching online safety in school guidance, the guidance is framed around current curriculum requirements in a number of subjects, and we have no plans to update it before September 2020. We will keep the guidance under review to make sure it remains relevant to curriculum requirements.

## ■ Pre-school Education

**Mr Richard Holden:**

[\[64374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government has plans to undertake a review of the statutory child to carer ratio for children in early years nursery education.

**Vicky Ford:**

To support early years providers during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to allow them greater flexibility to respond to changes in workforce availability and potential fluctuations in demand, the government has temporarily disapplied and modified certain elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework including on staff qualifications and ratios.

The disaplications are intended to remain in effect throughout the COVID-19 outbreak or until the government stipulates otherwise. The changes set out in the disaplications, including the requirements relating to staff ratios and qualifications, are reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure they remain appropriate and are consistent with wider government advice.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[65025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating additional funding to (a) nurseries and (b) early years



childcare providers that are working with a reduced occupancy rate as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Vicky Ford:**

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

We have said that we will continue to pay local authorities their regular instalments of Dedicated Schools Grant, including the early years block, as usual. It remains the case that local authorities can redistribute their free early education entitlement funding, in exceptional cases. That should only be done at local authorities' discretion, as a last resort and in a clearly focussed and targeted way, from providers who have closed to those who are open, in order to secure childcare for the children of critical workers and for vulnerable children.

Further, 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 (CJRS) and help for the self-employed. Details of support 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>.

As more settings open, the need to furlough staff may reduce. In such cases, if still required, settings can continue to access the CJRS to cover up to the proportion of their salary bill which could be considered to have been paid for from their private income (and in line with the appropriate guidance). As local authorities, working with childcare providers in their area, are best placed to make decisions in the interests of their local communities, they should continue to work in partnership with their early years sector and in doing so, should consider the current sufficiency of childcare for vulnerable children and children of critical workers, and the financial security of individual childcare settings. Guidance on the CJRS is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

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.

■ **Pupil Premium: Coronavirus**

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[64983]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to monitor spending of the pupil premium during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

All local authority-maintained schools, and most academies and free schools, are required to publish and maintain an online pupil premium strategy statement that sets



out the rationale for their spending decisions and how the impact of the approaches chosen will be measured.

In planning their pupil premium expenditure, schools are encouraged to make use of high quality evidence on effective practice in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment, such as that published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) on its website, which is available here: <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk>.

Based on extensive research conducted since 2011, the EEF recommends that schools give priority in their pupil premium spending to recruiting and developing high quality teachers, followed by targeted academic support and wider strategies to address non-academic barriers to success in school.

### ■ Schools: Bus Services

**Geraint Davies:**

[64051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken to increase access to school bus services.

**Nick Gibb:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for eligible children. A child is eligible if they are of compulsory school age, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than the statutory walking distance from their home. The statutory walking distance is 2 miles for children under the age of 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over. A child is also eligible if they live within the statutory walking distance but could not reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, or because the nature of the route means it would be unsafe for them to do so.

There are additional entitlements to free home to school transport for those children who are eligible for free school meals, or if a parent they live with receives the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit. These are known as extended rights and are intended to support low income families in exercising school choice.

It is for local authorities to decide how they will provide free transport for eligible children depending on local circumstances. They might, for example, provide a pass for free travel on a service bus, or they might provide a dedicated school bus or a taxi to transport children.

### ■ Schools: Social Distancing

**Geraint Davies:**

[64052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the recommendations made by the School Streets Initiative in relation to (a) healthier learning environments for school children and (b) increased space to ensure social distancing at schools.

**Geraint Davies:****[64058]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report of the all-party group on air pollution entitled, Air Quality Strategy to Reduce Coronavirus Infection, published on 29 May 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

Outdoor air quality and road traffic restrictions are the responsibility of local authorities. Where there are concerns about air quality the local authority must prepare an air quality action plan.

We are not aware of any recommendations to the Department on the impact of the School Streets Initiative on healthier educational environments. The Department published guidance (Building Bulletin 101) on achieving good indoor air quality in new and refurbished schools in 2019.

As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, made clear when he spoke at the daily press briefing on 19 June, the Department is working towards bringing all children and young people back to school in September. We have published further information and guidance to help schools prepare for September. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

## ■ Schools: Sports

**Rosie Cooper:****[64118]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will provide additional funding for PE and school sport in his next budget to account for the extended period of inactivity during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Nick Gibb:**

The School Sport and Activity Action Plan set out a range of measures to ensure that all children have access to high quality PE and sport sessions during the school week and opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day, to help them do the 60 minutes a day of physical exercise recommended by the Chief Medical Officer.

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

The Government remains committed to supporting schools to make good use of their sports facilities and to promote physical literacy and competitive sport. We plan to update the School Sport and Activity Action Plan with longer term proposals to support schools to improve children's activity levels.

## ■ Special Educational Needs

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[64122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the £6 million in funding allocated to implementation support for compulsory Relationship, Sex and Health Education in financial year 2019-20 has been spent on SEND accessibility.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[64123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to monitor (a) the number of parents who withdraw children from sex education at (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools, (b) the extent to which schools implement an LGBT+ integrated and inclusive approach to RSHE and (c) whether schools fulfil their legal obligation to make RSHE curriculum SEND accessible.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department is committed to supporting schools to deliver high quality teaching of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education to all pupils.

In light of the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and following engagement with the sector, the Department is reassuring schools that although the subjects will still be compulsory from 1 September 2020, schools have flexibility over how they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching. For further information, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 5 June to Question [55660](#).

The Department does not collect data on the numbers of pupils who are withdrawn from sex education. Schools will be required to have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, which should provide an explanation of the right to withdraw from sex education. Before granting a request for a pupil to be withdrawn, headteachers will be expected to discuss the request with parents and to document the decision-making process.

Schools must ensure the subject content of RSHE is an age and developmentally appropriate and the subjects must be taught sensitively and inclusively to meet the needs and backgrounds of their pupils. The statutory guidance states that all pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years and when LGBT content is taught, the guidance recommends it is integrated fully into a school's programme of study for this area of the curriculum.

RSHE must be accessible for all pupils. This is particularly important when planning teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. As with all curriculum subjects, lessons should be planned to address potential areas of difficulty and to remove barriers to pupil achievement, enabling pupils with SEND to engage with the RSHE curriculum.

The Department's central programme of support will help all schools in their preparation to deliver these subjects. It will cover all the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and is inclusive of all pupils.

The Department is working with SEND experts to support the development of teacher training materials. Consideration of the needs of pupils with SEND is integrated into the RSHE implementation programme and it is therefore not possible to specify the amount spent in financial year 2019-20 on SEND accessibility.

Regarding the monitoring of the implementation of RSHE, Ofsted will consider the provision for these subjects and how a school is meeting its obligations when judging the effectiveness of the school's support for pupils' personal development.

#### ■ Teachers: Mental Health

**Layla Moran:** [64310]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many days teachers have taken off work for mental health reasons in each year since 2015.

**Nick Gibb:**

The information requested is not held centrally.

#### ■ Universities: Foreign Students

**Afzal Khan:** [61574]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of international students who will study at UK universities in the 2020-21 academic year.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In the 2018/19 academic year, tuition fees from international students at UK higher education providers accounted for around £7 billion of sector income. The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak will have an unparalleled impact on all elements of the global and UK economies. The higher education sector, including student recruitment, is no exception. We have been working closely with the sector to monitor the likely impacts of COVID-19 on international student numbers, including restrictions on travel. We understand that the COVID-19 outbreak and a possible reduction in the number of international students poses significant challenges and we stand ready to help the sector with various mitigations.

On Monday 4 May, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced the package of measures to stabilise university admissions this autumn and ensure sustainability in higher education at a time of unprecedented uncertainty. Full details of the package have been published on GOV.UK:

[www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-package-for-universities-and-students](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-package-for-universities-and-students).

The government is also working to ensure that existing rules and regulations, including visa regulations, are as flexible as possible for international students under these unprecedented circumstances. For example, on 16 June, the government confirmed that distance/blended learning will be permitted for the 2020/21 academic year provided students intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow. In addition, higher education providers will be flexible in

accommodating applicants' circumstances where possible, including if applicants are unable to travel to the UK in time for the start of the academic year.

The new graduate route, due to be launched in summer 2021, provides an opportunity for international students who have been awarded their degree to stay and work in the UK at any skill level for 2 years. The government has also confirmed 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.

On Friday 5 June, the Department for Education announced Sir Steve Smith as the International Education Champion, a key deliverable of the 2019 International Education Strategy. Sir Steve Smith will assist with opening up export growth opportunities for the whole UK education sector, tackling international challenges such as those posed to attracting international students and forging lasting global connections. The International Education Strategy, published in March 2019 by the Department for Education and the Department for International Trade, set out a commitment to review progress following its publication. The review, which we intend to publish this autumn, will ensure that the International Education Strategy responds to this new context and the challenges that are posed by COVID-19.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Air Pollution: Coronavirus

**Andrew Selous:**

[64101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish the Air Quality Expert Group review of air pollution during the covid-19 lockdown period.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Air Quality Expert Group Report entitled "Estimation of changes in air pollution emissions, concentrations and exposure during the COVID-19 outbreak in the UK" was published on 1 July and is available on Defra's UK-Air website: [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/reports.php?report\\_id=1005](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/reports.php?report_id=1005).

**Karin Smyth:**

[64952]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his Department's policies of research that links dirty air and increased infections of covid-19; and what additional steps he is taking to keep air pollution levels low.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is taking a proactive approach to understand the possible links between air quality and COVID-19. That is why, with our Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG), we ran a rapid Call for Evidence to ensure we can more fully understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on air pollutant emissions, concentrations and human exposure. This report was published on 1 July. On the specific issue of

COVID-19 and the link to air pollution, it is a particularly challenging and uncertain area. We note that there is emerging evidence suggesting an association, but many of the emerging papers are, as yet, generally not peer-reviewed and are of variable quality. Currently, there is no clear evidence to suggest that air pollution has a direct link to the spread or severity of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom.

Improving air quality remains a top priority for the Government and, especially during these unprecedented times, we will continue to take robust and comprehensive action to improve air quality in the UK and minimise public health impacts.

## ■ Biodiversity: Property Development

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64138]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Biodiversity Net Gain, what steps he is taking to ensure that the mitigation hierarchy is fully adhered in advance of decision-making on that net gain.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government has been clear in its consultation on net gain, the subsequent Government response to that consultation, and in the Environment Bill's policy paper that biodiversity net gain should not undermine the importance of the mitigation hierarchy. We have also been clear that biodiversity net gain tools and guidance will instead reinforce and support adherence to the mitigation hierarchy which is already well established in planning policy.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64139]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Biodiversity Net Gain system will not undermine protections in relation to (a) ancient woodland and (b) other irreplaceable habitats.

**Rebecca Pow:**

A proposal to deliver biodiversity net gain does not affect the weight that should be given to other planning considerations, matters of planning policy, or legal obligations including those relating to protection of irreplaceable habitats.

Our irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are afforded the strongest protection and we committed in our 25 Year Environment Plan to increase protection of our existing trees and forests. As part of this, we have already strengthened the protection of ancient woodlands through the National Planning Policy Framework and the accompanying Planning Policy Guidance.

Through this strengthening, any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

In circumstances in which development results in the loss of irreplaceable habitat, these losses cannot be directly replaced. The requirement for a measurable 10% net gain will therefore not apply to irreplaceable habitat. Bespoke compensation

agreements should continue to be made. The Government will continue to engage with stakeholders as secondary legislation is developed for irreplaceable habitats.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64140]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the cost to the public purse and (b) resources required to introduce the (a) strategic planning and (b) development management for the Biodiversity Net Gain regime in England.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government published an [impact assessment](#) for Biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery strategies last year, which includes an assessment of related costs and benefits.

The annual ongoing cost to local government of the biodiversity net gain regime and local natural recovery strategies is £9.5 million per year. For central government, the estimated ongoing costs are £1.8 million for Natural England, and £1.3 million for Defra with one-off capital costs of £0.5 million. We continue to work with local authorities and our agencies to quantify any additional costs to deliver biodiversity net gain, in addition to professional organisations to make sure there is access to the right training, ecological expertise and systems required.

We are continuing to engage with stakeholders to refine our estimates of cost and work towards a more comprehensive assessment of required resources.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what safeguards he plans to put in place to ensure that the exemption of development orders, brownfield sites and the power to exempt any other developments from biodiversity net gain does not lead to a significant reduction in the number of developments required to deliver biodiversity gain.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of exempting developments granted planning permission through development orders on the effectiveness of the Government's policy that new developments should enhance biodiversity and create new green spaces for local communities to enjoy.

**Rebecca Pow:**

As stated in the Government response to the net gain consultation, the Government will not introduce broad exemptions from delivering biodiversity net gain, beyond those exemptions already proposed for permitted development and householder applications such as extensions. The Government will instead introduce narrow exemptions for the most constrained types of development.

Permitted development rights play a vital role in freeing up local planning authorities to deal with planning applications that matter to local communities and have a wider



social, economic and environmental impact. Whilst the biodiversity net gain provisions are not applicable to development undertaken through rights granted under the General Permitted Development Order, they are applicable to development permitted by local development orders and neighbourhood development orders.

The extent to which any exemption reduces the positive outcomes of this policy for wildlife and communities will remain an important consideration during the development of secondary legislation. Any further details on suggested exemptions will be subject to further engagement and consultation with stakeholders before implementation.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64144]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's biodiversity net gain plan is fully implemented.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government is fully committed to the implementation of biodiversity net gain. We have brought forward clauses in the Environment Bill to make the achievement of a 10% gain mandatory for housing and other types of development.

Throughout the two-year transition period, we will continue to work with industry bodies to make sure that appropriate training, expertise and guidance are made available.

The Government recognises the pressure that many local planning authorities are under. The net additional cost of new burdens placed on local authorities through biodiversity net gain will be assessed and funded.

**Tracey Crouch:**

**[64145]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the outcomes of biodiversity net gain are (a) monitored and (b) enforced.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Government's response to the net gain consultation, which was published last year, acknowledged the importance of effective monitoring and enforcement in securing meaningful gains for nature and communities.

The Environment Bill includes provisions for a public register of habitat improvement sites. This will provide an accessible public record of habitat enhancements undertaken outside the development site. This register will, as a minimum, detail the location of compensation sites, how many units and of what habitat types are created, and the planning reference of the development to which the units relate.

For delivery of habitats within development sites, planning application data is routinely published by local authorities and will provide key information about how new developments will achieve biodiversity net gain.

The Government does not propose to introduce new enforcement mechanisms for net gain; existing enforcement mechanisms in the planning system will be used. The



exception to this is where habitats are secured by conservation covenants. In these cases responsibility for monitoring and enforcement would sit with the organisation that holds the covenant.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Coronavirus**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report of the all-party group on air pollution entitled, Air Quality Strategy to Reduce Coronavirus Infection, published on 29 May 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Secretary of State welcomes the all-party group's report and has noted its recommendations with interest. Improving air quality is a top priority for the government and, especially during these unprecedented times, we will continue to take robust and comprehensive action to improve air quality in the UK and minimise public health impacts. We recently launched a rapid Call for Evidence to understand more fully the impact that coronavirus is having on changes in air pollution emissions, concentrations and exposure and Defra's Air Quality Expert Group is currently analysing the responses.

■ **Fisheries: Norway**

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[64298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Norwegian counterpart on fishing arrangements in any EU-Norway trade agreement, and how the UK interests in regard to the distant fishing fleet are being protected.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The UK has held constructive discussions with Norway regarding a fisheries framework agreement and separate discussions on a trade agreement. Those agreements remain completely separate.

With regards to our future fisheries relationship, we have held several rounds of positive and constructive discussions with Norway, and we look forward to concluding the UK-Norway fisheries agreement in the coming weeks.

■ **Fly-tipping and Waste Management: Fines**

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[64949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the fines given to those who (a) are caught fly-tipping and (b) fail to check if those disposing of waste have a valid waste carriers' licence.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra issued a call for evidence in 2015 prior to introducing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for those who have committed a fly-tipping offence. The responses to our call for evidence and further analysis when finalising the policy led to the maximum value of the FPN being set at £400.

In January 2019 we gave local authorities the power to issue a FPN to householders who fail in their duty of care. When consulting on this FPN, almost three-quarters of respondents felt that the proposed value (£200 default, maximum value of £400) was correct.

With regards to criminal prosecution for more serious fly-tipping offences, the punishment could be a fine of up to £50,000 or up to 12 months imprisonment or both when tried in a magistrates' court. The offence can attract an unlimited fine or up to five years imprisonment or both if convicted in a Crown Court.

We committed in our manifesto to increase penalties for fly-tipping and will continue to work with magistrates, the Sentencing Council and the Judicial Office to ensure magistrates are aware of the prevalence and the significance of fly-tipping and its impact on local communities, with a view to securing tougher penalties.

The latest 2018/19 fly-tipping prosecution outcome figures showed that the value of total fines increased by 29% to £1,090,000 compared with 2017/18.

**■ River Wye: Pollution****Sir Edward Davey:**[\[64844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of levels of pollution in the River Wye resulting from the farming of chickens; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The River Wye in England is at risk of failing its conservation target for phosphate in the lower reaches. This is a complex issue and is partly influenced by factors upstream including the River Lugg which discharges into the Wye below Hereford. The Lugg is currently failing its conservation target for phosphate as determined by the EU Habitats Regulations.

Phosphate is the primary cause for many water quality failures and originates from two main sources: discharges from sewage treatment works in accordance with environmental permits and from diffuse agricultural pollution, principally livestock manure, including chicken farming, and nutrients washing into the river during rainfall events. Permitted poultry farms are obliged to control manure. To protect water quality, the Environment Agency (EA) designates certain at-risk areas as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones which require landowners to follow rules for storing organic manure. The EA also uses Farming Rules for Water regulations which require farmers to keep livestock fertilisers and manures out of the water.

The EA is working with a range of stakeholders and partners, including those in Wales, to address the concerns about phosphate levels in the River Wye. The EA is aware that this is an issue of interest to many, especially as the River Wye Catchment is designated a Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In addition, the EA continues to investigate reports of algae blooms on the Wye and Lugg which can be toxic to wildlife, people and pets. It will follow these up where necessary.

## ■ **Water: Wolverhampton**

**Stuart Anderson:**

[64345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the recent increase in water consumption by households across Wolverhampton compared to normal levels of consumption; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for that increase.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We know that demand for water has increased in the recent months. Three main factors have contributed to this:

- A period of significantly less rainfall than average
- Hot weather
- Behavioural changes as a result of lockdown, such as recreational use of water and personal hygiene

Severn Trent is the water supplier for Wolverhampton. The CEO of Severn Trent Water attended the National Drought Group chaired by the Environment Agency on 5 June 2020 to discuss the current risks and approaches to the dry weather and water demand management.

The link to their annual performance report, which includes information on consumption, for 2019 is: [www.stwater.co.uk/content/dam/stw/regulatory-library/STW-Annual-performance-report%202018-19.pdf](http://www.stwater.co.uk/content/dam/stw/regulatory-library/STW-Annual-performance-report%202018-19.pdf)

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

### ■ **India: Overseas Aid**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[62557]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance his Department has spent in India in each of the last five years.

**Nigel Adams:**

[Holding answer 25 June 2020]: All information on FCO ODA spending is available at GOV.UK link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>

## ■ International Decade for People of African Descent

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[64378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 4 July 2019 to Question 270326 on International Decade for People of African Descent, whether he plans to reconsider the decision not to take specific steps to mark the UN International Decade for People of African Descent and its theme of recognition, justice and development following the Black Lives Matter protest.

**Nigel Adams:**

The UK Government strongly supports the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) and remains committed to combating racism, both domestically and internationally. There are no guidelines setting out how countries should mark the Decade. The UK has chosen to combat racism throughout the lifetime of the Decade by continuing to work to eradicate discrimination and intolerance in our country. The Government is committed to doing this in this decade, and beyond.

At home, our focus is on creating a fair society where all people, regardless of ethnic origin or background, are valued and able to participate fully and realise their own potential. Internationally, we believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different ethnic groups is to encourage countries to uphold their human rights obligations, particularly through international institutions such as the United Nations. The UK has participated in and joined consensus on the key 21st century UN events and instruments on racism, and is committed to speaking out against racism and intolerance bilaterally and in multilateral fora. During the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, we delivered two statements on the urgency of dealing with racism, one in the item 9 debate and one in the urgent debate. The Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon also discussed the importance of combatting racism during the UK's closing statement which was delivered on 26 June.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Coronavirus and Influenza

**Derek Twigg:**

[\[64076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions has he had with acute NHS Hospital Trusts on the safe management of patients presenting at A&E in winter 2020 with suspected (a) flu symptoms and (b) covid-19 symptoms.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* The Government has taken unprecedented action to support the health and care system to respond to COVID-19 and to prioritise patient safety.

The Government will continue to support our health and care services and is working with the National Health Service, Public Health England, local government and other key stakeholders on planning, to take account of the risk this winter of seasonal influenza cocirculating with COVID-19.

The flu vaccination programme will be a critical part of preparing the United Kingdom for winter, and to manage pressures on the NHS should we have co-circulation of seasonal flu and COVID-19 this winter.

Best practice guidance on infection prevention and control has been issued to NHS trusts for implementation ahead of and throughout winter, including the operating framework for patients arriving at accident and emergency.

The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/secondary-care/infection-control/>

## ■ Aviation: Coronavirus

**Lisa Nandy:**

**[59746]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2020 to Question 53422 on Aviation: Coronavirus, to which NHS hospitals were sick passengers identified by cabin crew transferred or further assessment and covid-19 testing between 22 January 2020 and 12 March 2020; and how many passengers were transferred to each of those NHS hospitals.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 22 June 2020]:* From the records held in the central airport monitoring hub a total of 62 sick passengers were identified by cabin crew. Data on which National Health Service hospitals passengers were transferred to after possible COVID-19 identification by cabin crew are not available.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software

**Stephen Timms:**

**[59179]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has made for communications through the covid-19 track and trace system with people who are not English speakers.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 17 June 2020]:* The Government launched NHS Test and Trace for England on 28 May 2020.

We aim to ensure that NHS Test and Trace is accessible for all groups in society. Equality assessments have been undertaken to inform policy decisions to implement the service and, in line with our legal duties, we continue to assess impact as NHS Test and Trace is rolled out. We will make ongoing improvements to ensure the service is fully inclusive and accessible to all.

Information and guidance about NHS Test and Trace follows the GOV.UK accessibility standards, but we intend to ensure it is also available in other languages. We are seeking to put in place translation services at testing sites, and the NHS 119 call centre uses the Language Line interpreter service and staff are trained to manage language barriers, including through use of this service.

The online contact tracing platform, and the NHS COVID-19 app are currently only available in English, but we have ensured the use of simple, plain English and are working towards making this available in other languages in future. Currently, for non-English speaking cases and contacts if they cannot complete the online tool, they are referred to contact tracers who have access to translation services which should be used if necessary. Further work is ongoing to refine the customer journey for these users as call handlers will not be aware of special requirements ahead of making a call.

**Owen Thompson:**

**[61736]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the cost to the public purse of the development of the original centralised covid-19 contact-tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* To date, the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million. Our investment in the Isle of Wight phase has provided us with valuable information that we can combine with Google and Apple's technology in a new solution to support the entire NHS Test and Trace service in a product that is right for the British public.

**Owen Thompson:**

**[61737]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which (a) companies and (b) other organisations received funding from the public purse to work on the Government's centralised coronavirus contact-tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* The National Health Service continues to work constructively with organisations that are helping to develop and test the NHS COVID-19 App. These companies include VMware/VMware Pivotal Labs, Zuhlke Engineering, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, the University of Oxford, the BBC, the RAF, as well as partners in countries including Singapore, Norway, Ireland, Switzerland, New Zealand and Germany.

For more information on companies and organisations that have received funding, details on individual contracts can be found on Contract Finder on GOV.UK.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

**[62262]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on developing the (a) NHS covid-19 app and (b) Apple/Google designed app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* To date, the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[62264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse was of the Isle of Wight pilot of the NHS covid-19 tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* To date, the total cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million and our investment in the Isle of Wight phase has provided us with valuable information that we can combine with Google and Apple's technology in a new solution to support the entire NHS Test and Trace service.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[62265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff in his Department are working on a covid-19 tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* There are currently 64 civil or crown servants working on the COVID-19 app.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[62412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the estimated cost to the public purse has been of the NHS covid-19 track and trace app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

To date the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[62413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the (a) development of the Track and Trace app and (b) merger of that app with Google and Apple.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

To date the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million. We will publish the total costs in due course.

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[62415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the additional cost will be of the further data protection requirements of the new covid-19 track and trace app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We will publish the total costs in due course.



**Angela Crawley:**

[\[62507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the Government spent on developing its NHSX contact tracing app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

To date the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million.

**Sir George Howarth:**

[\[64078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much has been spent on developing the Government's covid-19 contact tracing app to date; which companies were paid sums as part of that process; how much each such company received; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of that expenditure.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The cost of the National Health Service COVID-19 app will be £10.8 million as of 30 June 2020. This figure is based on the spend for developing and hosting the app together with associated policy, project, evaluation, assurance related activity. Details on individual contracts can be found on under Contract Finder on GOV.UK. Companies which helped to develop the NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app include VMware/VMware Pivotal Labs, Zuhlke Engineering, Microsoft, and Amazon Web Services. Our investment in the Isle of Wight phase has provided us with valuable information that we can now take forward in a new solution that is right for the British public.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Costs

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[60857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the track and trace scheme.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched NHS Test and Trace 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 27,000 contact tracing staff in England to support this service. These staff are a mix of call handlers and health professionals. 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'.

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.



## ■ Contact Tracing: Germany

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[62254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his German counterpart on their covid-19 contact tracing app; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* We have been in constant contact with a number of countries to share what we are learning and that will continue.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Mobile Phones

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[62414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which companies won Government contracts to develop the covid-19 track and trace app; and what the value of those contracts was.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Details on individual contracts can be found on Contract Finder on GOV.UK. Companies which helped to develop the National Health Service COVID-19 contact tracing app include VMware/VMware Pivotal Labs, Zuhlke Engineering, Microsoft, and Amazon Web Services.

## ■ Contact Tracing: Training

**Alex Norris:**

[\[59576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the training programme undertaken by NHS Test and Trace contact tracers includes information on (a) identifying child abuse and neglect and b) the steps to take in the event that they suspect a child is at risk.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 18 June 2020]:* All organisations that we work with are experts in undertaking call handling and have standard quality assurance processes that help drive continuous improvement from the point we go live.

A training package has been put together by experts in health protection and field epidemiology. Staff who join as call handlers' for Tier 3 and 'clinical staff' for Tiers 1 and 2 are required to complete Level 2 adult and child safe-guarding training. The training undertaken addresses both adult and child safeguarding training and identify when concerns should be escalated. Policies are in place to ensure contact tracers know how to escalate concerns.

Where contact tracers identify potential child abuse and neglect, they escalate these cases straight away to a specialist team for review and onward referral to the appropriate authorities.

### ■ Coronavirus: Alcoholic Drinks

**Fiona Bruce:** [\[58681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of alcohol use during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 June 2020]:* It is too early to make any assessment of the level of alcohol use during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department is working with Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement and stakeholders to monitor indicators to track any behaviour change.

### ■ Coronavirus: Almshouses

**Mr Stephen Morgan:** [\[45414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) recent trends in the level of covid-19 tests being undertaken in almshouse settings and (b) the effectiveness of such testing on improving the well-being of vulnerable people resident in those settings.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department recognise the importance of testing and the role a clear result plays in giving individuals assurance and the ability to make informed decisions. The Department is working with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure eligible individuals from vulnerable groups in a range of settings are able to access testing.

Thanks to the continuing increase in testing capacity, all symptomatic individuals in England and Wales and all symptomatic individuals aged five and over across the United Kingdom are eligible for a test for COVID-19.

The Department publishes daily figures including the number of COVID-19 tests undertaken but with the exception of whole care home testing, does not record the residence type of those tested.

### ■ Coronavirus: Clinical Trials

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[58650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions officials in his Department have had with (a) sponsors of the University of Oxford's Recovery trial and (b) suppliers of each medication being used in that trial to ensure that adequate supplies of those medications are in place to treat covid-19 patients in the event that the trial has positive results.

**Jo Churchill:**

Officials in the Department have regular conversations with the RECOVERY trial leads about the trial and central supply of medicines to the trial.

Teams in the Department, Public Health England, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and NHS England and NHS Improvement also have daily discussions with suppliers and manufacturers of medicines, including about supplies to support clinical trials. In addition, the Department has been securing additional supplies of a number of medicines, which would ensure sufficient stocks are available to be rapidly deployed for National Health Service patients, should clinical trial evidence show it to be safe and effective to do so. The Department continues to review supply requirements as further clinical evidence becomes available.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[60819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on NHS Test and Trace staff who are waiting for work.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched NHS Test and Trace 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 27,000 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.

**Owen Thompson:**

[\[61738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for the Test and Trace regime to be fully operational.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* NHS Test and Trace is a new, large-scale service, which launched on 28 May.

We have recruited 27,000 contact tracing staff in England to support this service. In addition, a package of £300 million of new funding has been made available to local authorities to work with NHS Test and Trace to develop local outbreak control plans, building on the work already done so far to respond to COVID-19.

The latest data shows that in total, since 28 May 2020:

- 21,105 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in England and of these 20,968 (99.4%) were transferred for contract tracing;

- 72.6% (15,225) of the people who tested positive for COVID-19 were reached by our contact tracers and asked to share details of their close contacts; and

- 88.6% (113,925) of close contacts were reached and advised to self-isolate.

We are working to reach more people – and continually making improvements to the service to do that.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Alex Norris:**

**[41144]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department holds information on people who have tested positive for covid-19 coming into contact with hospitals that do not have confirmed cases of covid-19 in the seven days preceding their positive test result.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 May 2020]:* The Department does not record this information as part of the information collected through COVID-19 testing programmes.

Increased testing capacity means that we will now be able to extend regular testing to asymptomatic staff, guided by Public Health England and clinical advice. This approach has been piloted in a number of acute, community and mental health providers and will inform the further roll out of this policy. This pilot should help our understanding of in hospital and nosocomial transmission, with the aim of limiting it where possible.

**Caroline Lucas:**

**[53378]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of communicating test results within 24 hours to people displaying symptoms on the effectiveness of the test and trace system to reduce the R rate of covid-19 infection; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government launched NHS Test and Trace on 28 May 2020. Contact tracing begins as soon as NHS Test and Trace receive notification that someone has tested positive for COVID-19. The more rapidly people can book a free test once symptoms start and we can communicate those test results, the quicker NHS Test and Trace service can identify people who may be at risk of infection and, if necessary, tell them to self-isolate, reduce the R rate and spread of the virus, and maintain transmission at low levels.

We are tracing the contacts of thousands of positive cases, using both online services and over the phone, and we are encouraged by the progress so far. In total, since 28 May to 10 June 2020, 72.6% (10,192) of the people who tested positive for COVID-19 were reached by our contact tracers and asked to share details of their close contacts. 90.6% (87,639) of close contacts were reached and advised to self-isolate.

**Mr Richard Holden:**

**[59636]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice and support is available for people who are clinically vulnerable to covid-19 but who have not been told that they are required to be shield.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 18 June 2020]:* Public safety throughout this period is the Government's top priority – this includes keeping safe society's most vulnerable. We advise those who are clinically vulnerable to follow the Staying Alert and Safe social distancing guidance available on the GOV.UK website. The advice is to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others by always staying two metres apart from others outside their household or support bubble, avoiding crowds, and keeping their hands and face as clean as possible.

Many local organisations across the country are providing support to vulnerable people. In addition, NHS Volunteer Responders are available to help open to anyone who needs to self-isolate for any reason and who may need support with their shopping, obtaining their medicines or who might need someone to talk to.

For those who are vulnerable or at risk and need help with shopping, medication or other essential supplies, they can call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm).

**Maria Eagle:**

**[61433]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to inform people who have been instructed to shield until 30 June 2020 what they are to do after that date; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 23 June 2020]:* On 22 June 2020, the Department set out a series of steps to relax the shielding guidance until shielding is paused on 31 July 2020. Full details are set out in the advice to clinically extremely vulnerable people at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

## ■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

**Dr Philippa Whitford:**

**[57225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the personal protective equipment stockpiled as part of the preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal have been used during the response to the covid-19 outbreak; and by what date he estimates those stockpiles will be replenished.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 15 June 2020]:* The United Kingdom has been an international exemplar in preparedness and our pandemic stockpile of personal protective

equipment (PPE) and vital supplies is considered a very high-quality mark in international terms. At the start of the pandemic, Public Health England already had large stockpiles of PPE as part of its ongoing contingency measures to prepare for an outbreak. There were also supplies of PPE held through the NHS Supply Chain.

The Government has massively expanded both our supply of PPE from overseas and our domestic manufacturing capability and we are confident in the stocks and sources of supply of PPE to meet the needs of health and social care staff over the next seven and 90 days.

The Government has now signed contracts for over 2 billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers, ensuring we build and maintain a domestic base for the future.

**Lilian Greenwood:**

[\[58695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with the Chief Scientific Officer to support the production of a CE-marked clear panel face mask.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 16 June 2020]:* 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.

## ■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[55946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of adults aged (a) 18 to 29, (b) 30 to 39, (c) 40 to 49, (d) 50 to 59, (e) 60 to 69, (f) 70 to 79, (f) over 80 in self-isolation as of 8 June 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 11 June 2020]:* Information on the number of people who have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace were published as experimental statistics on Thursday 11 June. These data refer to the first week of the service – 28 May – 3 June. The Department plans to publish similar information on a weekly basis. Over the coming weeks, as the service matures, more information will be provided on a weekly basis.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Justin Madders:**

[\[49034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of covid-19 test results have not been received (a) within seven days and (b) at all.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 2 June 2020]:* The Department does not hold this information in the format requested.

**Bill Wiggin:**

[\[51645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to make antibody tests available to the public through GPs.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]:* Antibody tests are available to National Health Service and care staff, eligible patients and care residents in England to see if they have had COVID-19 as part of the new national antibody testing programme. The antibody test will be available for clinicians to use in their routine management of NHS patients as appropriate, and also for any patient who is already having blood taken as part of other tests. A positive test result for antibodies does not mean that the person being tested is immune to COVID-19. There is currently no firm evidence that the presence of antibodies means someone cannot be re-infected with the virus or will not pass it on to someone else. If someone tests positive, they still need to follow social distancing measures and appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[53366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many tests sent to the national covid-19 test processing centres are processed in (a) 48 hours, (b) 72 hours, (c) 96 hours, (d) one week and (e) more than one week; what the reasons are for longer processing times; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department does not hold this information in the format requested.

## ■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus

**Mr David Jones:**

[\[51713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether general practitioners are entitled to conduct covid-19 antibody tests on their own authority.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 4 June 2020]:* Antibody tests are available to National Health Service and care staff, eligible patients and care residents in England to see if they have had COVID-19 as part of the new national antibody testing programme. The antibody test will be available for clinicians to use in their routine management of NHS patients as appropriate, and also for any patient who is already having blood



taken as part of other tests. A positive test result for antibodies does not mean that the person being tested is immune to COVID-19. There is currently no firm evidence that the presence of antibodies means someone cannot be re-infected with the virus or will not pass it on to someone else. If someone tests positive, they still need to follow social distancing measures and appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

#### ■ **Health and Social Services: Protective Clothing**

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[59893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports that health and social care workers are being asked to reuse single-use personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 22 June 2020]:* Public Health England published 'COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE)' updated guide on 17 April. This advises that suitable decontamination arrangements for some PPE items should be obtained from the manufacturer, supplier or local infection control. This guidance also included advice on when PPE can be reused.

#### ■ **Local Government: Coronavirus**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[47301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authority public health officials receive data on positive covid-19 test results in their local authority area.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 20 May 2020]:* The priority has always been to ensure that public health bodies, such as Public Health England (PHE), have the data they require under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations, and under the updates to the Control of Patient Information Regulations, to undertake their vital work in relation to contact tracing, case management and health surveillance. PHE provides the results to the appropriate local PHE Health Protection Team, who work with their respective local authorities as part of their routine public health response arrangements. We are developing a solution for our stakeholders to access the additional Management Information data that will further support their work, and local authorities and the National Health Service are top priorities.

#### ■ **Mental Health Act 1983**

**Marco Longhi:**

[\[63518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the 2018 Green Paper on the Mental Health Act 1983.



**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Government's response to the 2018 Green Paper 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' was published in July 2018.

We have also committed to publishing a White Paper which will set out the Government's response to Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983 and pave the way for reform of the Act.

We will publish our White Paper as soon as it is possible to do so. We will consult publicly on our proposals and will bring forward a Bill to amend the Act when parliamentary time allows.

**■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People****Alexander Stafford:**[\[61631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking ensure that children and young people who do not meet the CAMHS threshold have access to (a) mental health and (b) wellbeing support during summer 2020.

**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[62344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that children and young people who do not meet the threshold for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service support have access to mental health and wellbeing support during summer 2020.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for the City of Durham (Mary Foy MP) on 23 June 2020 to Question [903710](#).

**Munira Wilson:**[\[63507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that young people are still able to access child and adolescent mental health services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Munira Wilson:**[\[63508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that young people who need support for their mental health can (a) be referred to mental health support by professionals and (b) self-refer to mental health services.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Catherine West MP) on 25 June 2020 to Question 58038.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Coronavirus

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

**[64274]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mental health support has been provided to clinically extremely vulnerable people shielding during the covid-19 outbreak; and what estimate he has made on the number of people that have accessed that support.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business, offering support using digital, telephone and face-to-face approaches, including 24 hours a day, seven days a week crisis helplines, clearly accessible from trust websites.

The NHS has written to service providers, including general practitioners (GPs), on 4 June asking them to undertake a series of actions to support people who have been asked to shield. This includes ensuring every shielding individual has a named care coordinator to help coordinate different aspects of their healthcare, including accessing appropriate mental health care from NHS mental health services via their GP or other routes. A copy of the letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/06/C0583-nhs-update-on-shielding-june-2020.pdf>

No estimate has been made as the data does not identify people who are shielding.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Ethnic Groups

**Stephen Morgan:**

**[61764]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that mental health service provision reaches BAME communities as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* We want to ensure that all communities, including people from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background, can access services if they need to. National Health Service mental health services have remained open, and our community, talking therapies and children and young people's services have deployed digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support.

The Government has provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities to support adults and children. This includes charities that offer some support to BAME communities, such as the What? Centre, which supports young people with furthering their understanding of race, culture and identity in relation to mental health.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with BAME experts and others to support rapid knowledge and information sharing to encourage timely access to NHS mental health services.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Expenditure

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[63303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, by (a) how much and (b) what percentage expenditure on NHS mental health services in England increased by in each year since 2010.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The available information is shown in the following table and includes total spend on mental health services, including learning disabilities and dementia.

YEAR	ENGLAND £ MILLION	YEAR ON YEAR INCREASE £ MILLION	YEAR ON YEAR INCREASE %
2015/16	10,978.9	-	-
2016/17	11,601.9	623.0	5.7
2017/18	11,976.0	374.1	3.2
2018/19	12,513.2	537.2	4.5
2019/20	not yet available	-	-

Source : NHS Mental Health Dashboard, NHS England

The Department and the National Health Service do not hold financial data at a sufficiently granular level to provide the information requested prior to 2015/16.

## ■ Mental Health Services: West Lancashire

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[62352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate local provision of mother and baby mental health units for people in West Lancashire constituency.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* The Ribblesmere Mother and Baby Unit located in Chorley, Lancashire is one of four new specialist eight-bed mother and baby units opened as part of the delivery of the Five Year Forward View commitments for perinatal mental health services. It opened in 2018 and is one of the 19 mother and baby units in England.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increasing access to evidence-based care for women experiencing moderate/complex–severe mental health problems, to benefit an additional 24,000 women per year by 2023/24, in addition to the extra 30,000 women getting specialist help by 2020/21.

## ■ Mental Illness: Community Orders

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[62246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people have been given compulsory Community Treatment Orders following first episode psychosis in each of the last three years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* Information is not collected in the format requested.

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[62247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which mental health conditions can be subject to a Community Treatment Order.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* Any mental disorder for which someone can be detained under the Mental Health Act (MHA) can also form the basis of a Community Treatment Order (CTO).

The Mental Health Act 1983 makes no distinction between types of mental illness, stating that for its purposes, the general term “mental disorder” means “any disorder or disability of the mind”. While the MHA does not rule in or out particular disorders, learning disability as a condition is exempted from certain provisions of the Act, including that for CTOs, unless “associated with abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible conduct”.

## ■ Mental Illness: Drugs

**Barry Gardiner:** [\[62248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research his Department is undertaking on first episode psychosis and the long-term effect of anti-psychotic drugs.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* The Department funds health and care research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR is the largest funder of mental health research in the United Kingdom, investing £93.4 million in 2018/19.

Through this investment the NIHR supports a wide portfolio of mental health research, including 21 current awards funded directly through NIHR programmes for research on first-episode psychosis and the effects of anti-psychotic drugs and three new awards due to start in 2020/21 totalling an investment of £30.7 million in these important areas. The NIHR is also providing infrastructure support to over 50 studies through its biomedical research centres, clinical research facilities and applied research centres.

## ■ NHS and Social Services: Parking

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[61539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will continue to provide NHS staff, care staff, NHS Volunteer responders with free parking.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 23 June 2020]:* The provision of free parking for National Health Service staff by NHS Trusts has not ended and nothing has changed since the announcement on 25 March. However, free parking for staff has only been made possible by support from local authorities and independent providers and this support cannot continue indefinitely.

We also want the NHS to deliver on the Government's commitment on free hospital parking for those in greatest need, the disabled, frequent outpatient attendees, parents who have sick children that are staying overnight in hospital and staff working nightshifts. Implementation of this commitment has been on hold whilst the NHS has been managing the COVID-19 pandemic and devoting its hospital parking capacity to staff and other facilities necessary for managing the pandemic.

## ■ NHS: Coronavirus

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[39022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to use hospital laboratories to increase the capacity to test NHS staff for covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

National Health Service hospital laboratories are already being used to support the Government's testing programme as part of an extensive programme of laboratories across the country processing COVID-19 tests. COVID-19 tests are processed by laboratories in pathology networks across England.

## ■ NHS: Digital Technology

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[64114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to undertake a review of the (a) effectiveness and (b) outcomes of the Digital First programme in (i) primary care and (ii) other NHS service settings.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* The Digital First programme supports the delivery of access to primary care and helps patients and their carers manage their health. The NHS Long Term Plan commits that every patient will have the right to be offered digital-first primary care by 2023-24. An independent evaluation of Digital First has been commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement and is now underway. The evaluation will provide evidence on the impact of online consultation systems on patients, general practitioner practices and the wider health and social care system and will be used to inform policy and other digital initiatives. Other National Health

Service settings have implemented new digital ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic and there will be much to learn from these.

■ **NHS: Parking**

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[64364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to continue the hospital parking charge exemption for NHS workers beyond the covid-19 outbreak.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* The Government is considering how long free parking for National Health Service staff will need to continue, recognising that this has only been made possible by external support from local authorities and independent sector providers. The Government's focus remains on ensuring the commitment of free parking for the groups identified in their announcement of 27 December 2019 is implemented once the pandemic abates.

■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

**Alberto Costa:** [\[52149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the safe disposal of personal protective equipment.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England has set out guidance on the safe disposal of personal protective equipment in their Standard Operating Procedure. All disposal should be done in line with the rigorous legislative requirements set out by the Environment Agency.

■ **NHSX: Public Appointments**

**Joanna Cherry:** [\[61729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the membership of the Oversight Board of NHSX, chaired by Mark Gould.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* There is no Oversight Board for NHSX, which is a joint unit of the Department with NHS England and NHS Improvement. Matthew Gould is the Chief Executive.

■ **Patients Know Best: Data Protection**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[56062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether personal data submitted under the Patient Knows Best scheme is sold on to companies for (a) research, (b) insurance and (c) other purposes.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[56063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the NHS is of the contract for the Patient Knows Best scheme.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Personal data submitted cannot be sold on. Patients Know Best have entered into Information Sharing Agreement and Information Processing Agreements with local providers with clear provisions regulating the use of patient records compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation.

The Innovation and Technology Payment (ITP) programme runs an annual competition to provide support for the adoption of new innovations in the National Health Service. The ITP Evidence Generation Fund (EGF) is focused on developing the evidence base to support the wider adoption of Personal Health Records (PHRs) across the health and care system. Patients Know Best, one supplier of PHRs, has been funded through the EGF from April 2019 to September 2020. £946,071 (including VAT) has been allocated to Patients Know Best to date.

#### ■ **Pharmacy: Contact Tracing**

**Nick Fletcher:**

[\[55062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to allow pharmacy workers to be exempt from having to isolate as a result of the track and trace app.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Anyone who has had close recent contact with someone who has COVID-19 must self-isolate if the NHS Test and Trace service asks them to do so. There are no exemptions. If there is more than one case of COVID-19 associated with a workplace, employers should contact their local health protection team who will undertake a risk assessment, provide public health advice and, where necessary, establish a multi-agency incident management team to manage the outbreak.

#### ■ **Pneumonia: Coronavirus**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[58649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide an update on the (a) availability of treatments for community-acquired pneumonia associated with covid-19 and (b) stockpiling of those treatments to ensure sufficient and equitable access.

**Jo Churchill:**

We are not aware of any current supply issues with treatments for community-acquired pneumonia associated with COVID-19. Antibiotic treatments are held in the pandemic influenza preparedness stockpile which can be released at times of critical supply shortages.

As part of our concerted national efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are doing everything we can to ensure patients continue to access safe and effective medicines.

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

### ■ Prisoners' Transfers: Mentally Disordered Offenders

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[61685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the (a) median and (b) 90th percentile time taken for a transfer of a prisoner to a secure hospital for treatment under the Mental Health Act in 2019.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[61686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of transfers of a prisoner to a secure hospital for treatment under the Mental Health Act took longer than the national guideline of 14 days in 2019.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Data on mental health transfers in prisons is only held at an aggregated level and it is not possible to determine median and percentile figures as this would require patient-level information.

Within adult prisons, 285 out of 979 (29.1%) transfers of a prisoner to a secure hospital for treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983 in 2019 occurred within 14 days.

### ■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

**Beth Winter:** [\[64370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many bids to supply personal protective equipment were received during the procurement process that resulted in the award of contracts to (a) Pest Fix and (b) Crisp Websites Ltd; whether the total value of contract with those companies was paid as a lump sum; and how many items of personal protective equipment have been (i) sourced and (ii) delivered under contracts with those companies.

**Beth Winter:** [\[64371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the full contracts awarded to (a) Pest Fix and (b) Crisp Websites Ltd for the supply of personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak were not published within 20 days; and what plans he has to publish those contracts.



**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* The award of this contract to PestFix (which is a trading name of Crisp Websites Limited) is the subject of a Judicial Review which has been brought against the Department. The Department is taking legal advice and considering its response. In these circumstances it would be inappropriate to respond to the issues and points raised in this question as this might prejudice the Department's legal position.

**■ Protective Clothing: Coronavirus****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[62540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK-wide Covid-19: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Plan, what recent assessment he has made of the equitable distribution of PPE across the four nations of the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* Our personal protective equipment (PPE) strategy is United Kingdom-wide, making sure that frontline workers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have the PPE they need to stay protected while taking care of patients. We are working closely with the devolved administrations to co-ordinate the distribution of PPE across the UK.

We are working to agree a protocol between the four nations of the UK to underpin our approach to PPE sourcing and supply. The stock positions in each of the four nations is changing rapidly, which means on some occasions other nations, including Scotland, have been able to restock from their own sources more quickly.

Representatives from the four nations are in touch regularly and there is an established system of mutual aid to make sure PPE gets to the frontline across the whole of the UK.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[62541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK-wide Covid-19: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Plan, how many items have been sold to suppliers by Public Health England on the condition that they would only be given to practices in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 25 June 2020]:* 14 million items of personal protective equipment have been sold to wholesalers who supply general practitioners located in England only.

**■ Protective Clothing: Prices****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[61756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle profiteering on the supply of personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Stephanie Peacock:**

[\[61757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of profiteering on the supply of personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 June 2020]:* The United Kingdom is paying the market rate for medical supplies and working with partners to ensure a fair international market for access to COVID-19 medical equipment.

Personal protective equipment prices can be affected by a range of factors, such as market conditions and air freight costs, but we are taking a number of steps to reduce inflated prices and we expect each wholesaler to apply their normal margins and levels of profit for these types of products.

#### ■ **Protective Clothing: Production**

**Rachel Reeves:**

[\[64172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much Deloitte was awarded for the Government contract to increase British production of protective equipment and source stocks from the UK and abroad.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 29 June 2020]:* Procurement Regulations require the publication of Contract Award Notices which contain the finalised agreed value of the contract. The Department publishes certain information on Contracts Finder in line with these regulations.

#### ■ **Social Distancing: Coronavirus**

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[56188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help protect, shield and test adults with (a) severe learning disabilities and (b) serious medical conditions.

**Jo Churchill:**

We recognise that COVID-19 poses specific challenges for people with a learning disability, autistic people and their families and carers. We are working hard across Government, the National Health Service, social care and with delivery partners to ensure that we mitigate these challenges as much as possible and to ensure the safety of people with a learning disability and autistic people, including in inpatient mental health settings.

Expert doctors have identified specific medical conditions that, based on what we knew about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19. These patients have been asked to shield themselves in accordance with the guidance on shielding at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

Guidance on COVID-19 testing, including who is eligible for a test and how to get tested is set out at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested)

## ■ **Tumours: Health Services**

**Lee Rowley:**

**[56142]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on referrals for brain tumours; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Health Service is now working on the restoration and recovery of all cancer services. We are encouraging anybody with symptoms that could be indicative of cancer to contact their general practitioner (GP). GPs will continue to refer on to cancer pathways in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance so that patients can be managed appropriately. Cancer Alliances are working with the NHS to ensure diagnostic services are available to carry out necessary investigations.

## HOME OFFICE

## ■ **Animal Experiments: Licensing**

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[63244]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many licences have been (a) granted and (b) amended to allow for research and tests on animals into the SARS-CoV-2 virus and covid-19.

**James Brokenshire:**

There have been 11 project licences granted and 29 project licences amended under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to authorise work relating to the SARS-CoV-2 virus and COVID-19 research.

## ■ **Asylum: Finance**

**Mark Tami:**

**[62306]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the rate of asylum support during the covid-19 outbreak commensurate with the increase in the universal credit standard allowance.

**Chris Philp:**

We have been reviewing the level of the cash allowances provided to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute, as we do each year to ensure that they remain capable of meeting their essential living needs (the legal test).

As a result of this work, the standard allowance has been raised to £39.60 per week from £37.75 per week, an increase of around 5%. This increase is significantly higher than the current general rate of inflation, which Office of National Statistics data shows was only 0.5% in the 12 months period to May.

The level of the allowance is not linked to social security benefits.

In addition to the allowance, we also provide free accommodation, with utilities and council tax paid for and there is free access to the NHS and free access to education for their children.

The UK has a generous record in supporting asylum seekers. Last year, we made around 20,000 grants of asylum or protection (one of the higher figures in Europe), as well as offered protection to 3,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – the highest number of any country in Europe. In addition, we have directly resettled around 20,000 people from the most dangerous areas of the world (especially Syrians) in the UK over the last 5 years. Finally, we spend around £14 billion per year in Overseas Aid, helping millions of people around the world. This is the highest amount of any country in Europe and we are the only G7 country to meet the 0.7% of GNI Overseas Aid target.

**■ Asylum: Government Assistance****Chris Stephens:****[32181]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to support (a) vulnerable and (b) other (i) asylum seekers and (ii) refugees during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Philp:**

We have also been reviewing the level of the cash allowances provided to asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute, as we do each year to ensure that they remain capable of meeting their essential living needs.

As a result of this work, the standard allowance has been raised to £39.60 per week from £37.75 per week, an increase of around 5%. The increase is significantly higher than the current general rate of inflation, which Office of National Statistics data shows was only 0.5% in the 12 months period to May 2020. In addition to asylum support payments, asylum seekers are provided with free accommodation, utilities are paid for, council tax is paid for, they have free access to the NHS and their children have free access to education.

In March, we introduced temporary measures to continue supporting those asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and newly recognised refugees who would normally

have had their accommodation and financial assistance stopped. Home office is currently reviewing this additional support,

The UK has a generous record in supporting asylum seekers. Last year, we made around 20,000 grants of asylum or protection (one of the higher figures in Europe), as well as offered protection to 3,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – the highest number of any country in Europe. In addition, we have directly resettled around 20,000 people from the most dangerous areas of the world (especially Syrians) in the UK over the last 5 years. Finally, we spend around £14 billion per year in Overseas Aid, helping millions of people around the world. This is the highest amount of any country in Europe and we are the only G7 country to meet the 0.7% of GNI Overseas Aid target

## ■ Asylum: Interviews

**Christine Jardine:**

[\[62563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the recommendations of the report entitled *Beyond Belief*, published by Freedom from Torture on 16 June 2020, that caseworkers receive appropriate and relevant training when conducting interviews with victims of torture to encourage full disclosure and identify important aspects of claims, avoiding costly appeals; and what plans she has to report to the recommendations in that report.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office remains committed to delivering a fair and humane asylum system that is sensitive to the needs of the claimants, so that sufficient information can be obtained to facilitate fair and sustainable decisions on asylum claims. We ensure that asylum seekers are given every opportunity to disclose information relevant to their claim before a decision is taken, even where that information may be sensitive or difficult to disclose.

The report published by Freedom from Torture acknowledges that there have been signs of progress within the Home Office. Improvements have been made to policy instructions to emphasise the importance of caseworker conduct during asylum interviews, in line with an earlier recommendation made by Freedom from Torture. The report also acknowledges the increase in asylum grant rates at initial decision stage, which is indicative of our efforts to improve asylum decision making and get decisions first time.

Following the publication of the Freedom from Torture report entitled 'Proving Torture', a collaborative response to improving training for asylum caseworkers was initiated to develop a training package which directly addressed concerns raised in the report. This resulted in the training course 'Assessing Evidence: Medical Legal Reports', which has been rolled out to asylum caseworkers, senior caseworkers and technical specialists since December 2018. The training is now mandatory for any caseworker dealing with asylum claims where Medico-legal reports have been submitted.

We will continue to look at the themes raised in the report as part of our on-going commitment to improve decision quality and the customer experience.

## ■ Departmental Responsibilities

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[64133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to Written Statement HCWS287 on 11 June 2020 on Machinery of Government Change, if she will publish the evidential basis for the decision to transfer responsibility for the Official Secrets Acts (a) 1911, (b) 1920, (c) 1939 and (d) 1989 from the Ministry of Justice to the Home Office; what assessment he has made of the effect of countering the activities of hostile states of that change; and if she will make a statement.

**James Brokenshire:**

As announced in the Queen's Speech in 2019, the Home Office is reviewing the legislation relating to hostile state activity to assess whether additional powers are required to address the threats to the UK.

The Official Secrets Acts (OSAs), along with other relevant Acts, are being considered as part of this work.

Given that the Home Office is already leading much of the policy work on OSAs, transferring the policy ownership from the Ministry of Justice to the Home Office is a matter of matching the formal position to the reality. We will continue to work closely with colleagues across Government as we develop our thinking on what legislative reform is required.

## ■ Detainees: Coronavirus

**Stephen Doughty:**

[\[42048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) staff members and (b) residents living in Home Office supported (i) asylum accommodation and (ii) detention facilities have (A) been tested and (B) tested positive for covid-19 since 1 January 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

The health of those in asylum accommodation and immigration removal centres (IRC) is of the utmost importance.

The Accommodation providers recognise the challenge of managing COVID 19 within our accommodation estate and are working closely with Public Health England (PHE) on how their guidance on social distancing and self-isolation is properly applied, while ensuring that people can continue to access essential services.

Any individual who has symptoms is able to be tested for covid 19. We do not currently publish figures in relation to the testing of asylum accommodation staff and our service users for Covid-19.

All immigration removal centres have dedicated health facilities run by doctors and nurses which are managed by the NHS or appropriate providers. The Home Office is

working closely with NHS England health and justice teams and regional commissioning teams to support their planning and delivery of healthcare services, including testing, in immigration removal centres during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Provisional management information indicates that as of 21 June, there have been 12 confirmed cases of COVID-19 across our detention supplier, healthcare and escorting staff. All of whom have now recovered. In addition, there have been two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in detained individuals. A third individual was identified but after his release from detention had been agreed. Whilst in the IRC the individual was in isolation. He was released as there was no immediate prospect of removal.

As of 26 June, no other detained individuals have tested positive for COVID-19.

## ■ Detention Centres

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[62320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that local communities are consulted and notified before the opening of new immigration holding facilities.

**Chris Philp:**

There are currently no plans to open new Immigration Removal Centres or Residential Short-Term Holding Facilities. When opening or closing immigration detention facilities the Home Office will consult with relevant local authorities as a matter of routine.

## ■ Detention Centres: Coronavirus

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[62577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) staff working and (b) people detained in immigration removal centres are tested for covid-19.

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[62578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the risks of covid-19 for (a) staff working in and (b) immigrants detained in immigration removal centres.

**Chris Philp:**

The safety and health of staff working in the detention estate and people who are detained are of the utmost importance.

The Home Office, its suppliers and NHS England healthcare providers in immigration removal centres are following all Public Health England guidance on COVID-19 for the management of COVID-19. Universal testing is not currently recommended under these guidelines, this includes staff, people who are detained and those being released into the community. Any testing conducted will be dependent on individual circumstances.



The Home Office is taking proactive steps to monitor, manage and mitigate the threat of COVID-19 to staff and people who are detained and to reduce the likelihood of the infection spreading. Guidance on managing these risks was implemented on 5 May 2020 and subsequently published on gov.uk on 5 June

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-immigration-removal-centres>.

As of 23 June 2020, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in immigration removal centres.

#### ■ Home Office: Opinion Polls

**Judith Cummins:**

[62470]

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

**James Brokenshire:**

Opinion polling and focus groups - along with other research methodologies and techniques - are conducted across the Department by individual business areas.

Each Directorate is responsible for commissioning work to meet their specific business needs. The information requested could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

#### ■ Home Office: Written Questions

**Paul Blomfield:**

[20474]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to answer Question 14690 tabled on 10 February 2020 by the hon. Member for Sheffield Central.

**Chris Philp:**

The reponse for UIN 14690 was given on 3rd July 2020.

#### ■ Immigration: Applications

**Caroline Lucas:**

[62381]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 8 June 2020 to Question 49637, if she will make it her policy to allow people who are making in-country claims for asylum to complete their applications virtually during the covid-19 pandemic; and what support her Department will provide to asylum seekers to complete those applications digitally.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office does not intend to change the current policy that asylum claims must be made in person. The Home Office has temporarily introduced additional locations to register asylum claims, with social distancing measures in place at these locations for the safety of claimants and Home Office staff. These are temporary arrangements which will be kept under review to align with HMG guidance. These changes do not represent a new operating model, they are contingency measures put

in place during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure that asylum seekers are able to safely register their claims.

## ■ Immigration: EU Nationals

**Paul Blomfield:**

[\[14690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason her Department did not include the right to rent in the UK in the list of options for a person with (a) settled and (b) pre-settled status to choose from when requesting a share code and in answer to the question, why are you proving your status.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office is planning to launch an online right to rent status checking service later this year.

The new online service will enable EEA nationals granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme, and non-EEA nationals with biometric residence permits and cards to demonstrate their right to rent.

The online right to rent checking service will build on the general launch of the 'View and prove your settled or pre-settled status' service for those granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

## ■ Personation

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[62400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the level of identify theft in each of the last three years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects information from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau on the number of recorded frauds. From information held centrally, it is not possible to separately identify offences of fraud in which identify theft has been involved.

## ■ Police: Schools

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[62596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending stop and search powers to schools-based police officers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The police have a stop and search power under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 which allows individuals on school premises to be searched for a bladed or pointed article or offensive weapon when there are reasonable grounds to suspect a person on those premises of having such an article or weapon, or of being threatened with such an article or weapon. This power also allows the school premises to be searched for such articles and weapons.

**■ Proscribed Organisations: Social Media**

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[64197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the extent of the use of the messaging platform Telegram by far-right and extreme-right wing organisations to organise; and when she last made representations to representatives of that company on that matter.

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[64198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she last met with representatives of (a) Facebook, (b) YouTube, (c) Twitter, (d) Telegram, (e) FourChan, (f) WhatsApp, (g) Instagram, (h) TikTok, and (i) Gab to discuss the steps those organisations are taking to (i) combat extremist material, (ii) remove material from proscribed organisations and (iii) remove other material linked to criminal activity in the UK from their platforms.

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[64200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the (a) security of and (b) use of by extremist, far-right and extreme-right organisations the platform Telegram.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government has been clear that tech companies need to work together and act more quickly to remove all forms of terrorist content from their platforms.

We know that terrorists and extremists exploit a wide range of platforms to spread their views and to incite terrorist attacks, from mainstream platforms to secure messaging applications and anonymous forums.

To tackle terrorism online, the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), based in the Metropolitan Police, refers illegal terrorist content to companies for removal. Within the Home Office, we work closely with our international partners and engage with industry colleagues to discuss how platforms can best safeguard their users from terrorism, while also encouraging tech companies work together as one coordinated body through the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), to reduce the availability of terrorist content online.

Details of meetings between Ministers and external bodies and organisations are provided through the usual quarterly returns published by the Cabinet Office.

**■ Quarantine: Musicians**

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:** [\[65018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will add performing musicians who rely on international contracts to the list of jobs exempted from the quarantine rule.

**Kevin Foster:**

Since 8 June, all passengers arriving in the UK without having travelled through another part of the Common Travel Area have been required to self-isolate for 14 days, apart from those on a short list of exemptions. Being a performing musician does not qualify for exemption from the requirement to self-isolate. The package of health measures at the border, including the list of exemptions, are subject to regular review to ensure they remain effective and necessary.

**Rape: Criminal Investigation****Sir Edward Davey:**[\[62269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has given to police forces on continuing rape investigations when victims refuse to hand over their mobile phones to the police because of privacy concerns; and if she will make a statement.

**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[62270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking in response to the Information Commissioner's report on police mobile phone data extraction; and if she will make statement.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The requirement for police and prosecutors to pursue all reasonable lines of enquiry should be balanced with victims feeling confident that they will be treated fairly and with dignity. The Home Office welcomes the Information Commissioner's recent report into current practice in relation to data taken from mobile phones.

The College of Policing, which leads on providing guidance to police forces on operational activity and standards, are already in the process of developing guidance for investigators who make decisions on the use of mobile data extraction.

The Home Office will support the College on this work and, with other policing partners and the Crown Prosecution Service, will consider the recommendations made by the Information Commissioner.

Further to this, as part of work under the Government's Rape Review, evidence is being gathered to enable us to better understand how handling and outcomes for rape cases could be improved. This includes looking at the impact of the number of victims withdrawing their support for prosecution and will be published later this year.

**UK Visas and Immigration: Coronavirus****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[64937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance UK Visas and Immigration has issued to companies which operate overseas visa application centres on the phased reopening of those centres.

**Kevin Foster:**

UKVI continues to work closely with our commercial partners, who operate our overseas visa application centre network, to ensure they abide by the local social distancing measures in the countries they operate. Our commercial partners have given UKVI detailed assurances on the steps they have taken, prior to reopening, which are designed to keep their staff and visa customers safe. Where possible, UKVI staff have been visiting the application centres as an added layer of assurance our commercial partners are following appropriate procedures. Information for customers on these arrangements is provided on the commercial partner webpages for individual locations, signposted from gov.uk and highlighted as part of the visa application process customers follow.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****Domestic Abuse: Speech and Language Disorders****Geraint Davies:**[\[64811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that the domestic abuse strategies of local authorities include details of how people's speech, language and communication needs are identified and supported.

**Luke Hall:**

The Domestic Abuse Bill will introduce a statutory duty on local authorities to commission support in safe accommodation for all victims, including children, in line with a local needs assessment and strategies. This duty will be underpinned by robust statutory guidance, clearly setting out expectations on local authorities in meeting their duty which will come into force from April 2021.

**High Rise Flats: Insulation****Gareth Thomas:**[\[64063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors on the availability of fire experts to complete the EWS1 form for external wall fire reviews; and if he will make a statement.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Minister for Fire and Building Safety met with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) on Tuesday 23 June to discuss the use of the EWS1 form in valuations of high-rise blocks. The EWS1 was designed to address concerns around the potential for costly remediation works on high-rise buildings. I recognise the leadership role RICS has taken in this challenging area. RICS are engaging with insurers to unblock concerns around risk which are impacting on professional capacity.

## ■ Homelessness: LGBT People

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[64912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid- 19 outbreak on homeless (a) trans LGBTQ+ and (b) BAME LGBTQ+ young people.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[64915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what housing support his Department will provide to homeless LGBTQ+ youth who have not been rough sleeping during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alex Cunningham:** [\[64916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Covid-19 Rough Sleepers Taskforce is taking to address the specific housing needs of (a) homeless LGBTQ+ young people and (b) LGBTQ+ young people who are at risk of homelessness.

**Luke Hall:**

We recognise that LGBTQ+ homelessness is an important issue, particularly among young people, and that LGBTQ+ people who find themselves homeless may have a different experience of homelessness. This department has provided funds to both charities and local authorities which will enable to them to support their communities, including LGBTQ+ people, whether they have been homeless, are at risk of homelessness or are rough sleeping.

At the beginning of the crisis, our priority was to urgently bring vulnerable people inside so they could self-isolate and stop the virus spreading. We backed this with £3.2 million in emergency funding for local authorities to support vulnerable rough sleepers, and a further £3.2 billion to help councils to manage the impacts of COVID-19, including supporting homeless people. This may include people identifying as LGBTQ+. This has had a huge impact - thanks to the hard work of local authorities, agencies and the homelessness sector around the country – as nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation, including hotels, since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown period. On 24 June we announced that we are providing local authorities with a further £105 million to enable them to best support the nearly 15,000 people placed into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 14 May MHCLG announced £6 million of emergency funding to provide relief for frontline homelessness charitable organisations who are directly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Following a successful bidding process, over 130 charities across England are set to benefit from the £6 million emergency fund. Successful bids included Stonewall Housing which provides housing advice and support for LGBTQ people whether they are homeless, at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.

Announced on 2 May, the Rough Sleeping Taskforce has one overriding objective: to ensure that as few people as possible who have been brought in off the streets in this pandemic return to the streets. Supporting the Taskforce are our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisor roles that have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[64913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the level of homelessness among LGBTQ+ young people.

**Luke Hall:**

We recognise that many LGBT people who find themselves homeless may have a different experience of homelessness. However, data on this issue is limited. Sexual orientation is not a mandatory field collected through the Homelessness Case Level Information Collection. We therefore do not hold robust or consistent data across local authorities on LGBT homeless households.

In the Rough Sleeping Strategy, we announced a range of measures, including undertaking research with the Government Equalities Office into the nature of LGBT homelessness.

The Department is providing local authorities with training free of charge on Key Groups to help tackle issues facing vulnerable groups, including LGBT people. Delivered by Stonewall Housing, the training package develops an awareness as to why LGBT people may be at greater risk of homelessness, and the barriers LGBT people face when seeking homelessness support. Additionally, the training seeks to outline the statutory and non-statutory options available to support clients. The training programme is expected to cater for 600 members of the frontline homelessness workforce over the course of 2019/20.

We have also put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisor roles that have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[64914]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Minister for Women and Equalities on the effects of the covid 19 outbreak on LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

**Luke Hall:**

This is a public health crisis more than anything and so requires a health response. We have worked across the public sector in order to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping for all throughout the crisis.



To enable this, our priority is to bring people inside so they can self-isolate and stop the virus spreading. This Government has provided funding to assist local authorities to provide accommodation and support to vulnerable people who are at risk of, or who have been diagnosed with, coronavirus. This may include people identifying as LGBT, as well as those who identify as having another protected characteristic. We will continue to work closely with local authorities to ensure that they have the resources and guidance they need to protect all people who are currently, or at risk of, sleeping rough or becoming homeless. It is the responsibility of individual local authorities to make their own decisions about vulnerability when providing services.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, charities across the country including LGBT charities were able to bid for funding through the VCSE fund which is £6 million of emergency funding as part of a £750 million package of government support for UK charities who may have been impacted by the pandemic. This Coronavirus (COVID-19) Homelessness Response Fund was delivered by Homeless Link and applications closed on Wednesday 27 May. This work is to support rough sleepers into long-term accommodation, with more than 15,000 helped off the streets during the pandemic.

We have also put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisor roles that have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

£3.2 billion of additional funding was provided to local authorities to enable them to respond to other COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver. This is in addition to £3.2 million in targeted funding to ensure that we minimise the risk to those rough sleepers unable to self-isolate. On 24 June we announced that we are providing local authorities with a further £105 million to enable them to best support the 15,000 people placed into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[64917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) nature and (b) scale of LGBTQ+ homelessness using Homelessness Case Level Information Collection data.

**Alex Cunningham:**

**[64918]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of support provided to LGBTQ+ homeless people using Homelessness Case Level Information Collection data.

**Luke Hall:**

We recognise that LGBT homelessness is an important issue, particularly among young people, and that LGBT people who find themselves homeless may have a different experience of homelessness. However, data on this issue is limited. Sexual orientation is not a mandatory field collected through the Homelessness Case Level

Information Collection. We therefore do not hold robust or consistent data across local authorities on LGBT homeless households.

■ **Local Government: Nottinghamshire**

**Ben Bradley:** [\[64315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department is holding discussions with local authorities in Nottinghamshire on the potential benefits of reform to local government in that county.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

My Department and I regularly have discussions with local authorities, including those in Nottinghamshire, on a wide range of issues including local government reorganisation. We are always ready to discuss with councils proposals for local government reorganisation that can improve services, increase efficiency, give rise to savings, result in stronger local accountability and leadership, and genuinely empower towns, parishes, and communities. We intend to bring forward further plans on this in our Devolution White Paper this Autumn.

■ **Planning Permission**

**Mr Toby Perkins:** [\[64883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many planning applications have been referred to him due to non-determination by a local authority in each year since 2015, by local authority.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Since 1 January 2015 up until 30 June 2020, there were 3,918 s78 planning appeals and householder appeals where the appellant appealed to The Planning Inspectorate before the local planning authority had made a decision on the relevant planning application (non-determination). This represents approximately 4 per cent of all s78 planning appeals and householder appeals received in the same time period.

The attached table provides the number of appeals against each Local Planning Authority and the year the appeal was submitted

**Attachments:**

1. Appeals against each Local Planning Authority [PQ 64883 table - Planning appeals against each Local Planning Authority.xlsx]

■ **Social Services: Local Government**

**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[64829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the social care sector of local authority insolvency; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

We have made £3.7 billion available to local authorities through an un-ringfenced grant so they can address pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including expenditure pressures from adult social care. This includes £500 million of additional funding announced by the Secretary of State on 2 July.

Over 90 per cent of the funding announced in March and April has been allocated to councils with responsibility for social care services; allocations of the latest tranche of £500 million will be shared in due course. Local authorities have also received £600 million through the Infection Control Fund to pass on to social care providers.

The Department recognises the additional costs and pressures on finances councils are facing as a result of the current Covid-19 crisis. We continue to engage regularly with the local government sector, which includes our ongoing financial monitoring survey and direct contact with councils and their representatives, local Leaders and Chief Executives. We have also worked closely with CIPFA who have temporarily amended their guidance on the use of section 114 notices to further encourage local authorities to make contact with the Department in the first instance to advise of any immediate financial concerns.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Protective Clothing: Coronavirus****Emily Thornberry:**[\[64863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department took with the Department for Health and Social Care in January 2020 to source personal protective equipment to help prepare for the effect of covid-19 on the UK.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Since the onset of the coronavirus crisis, the Department for International Trade (DIT) has been working closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to assist the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) in identifying sources for the personal protective equipment (PPE) that they needed. The combined DIT, FCO and DHSC efforts have resulted in new purchase orders from the DHSC for over 30.7 billion items of PPE being raised through new global sources, alongside existing British suppliers to the NHS.

**JUSTICE****■ Administration of Justice: Human Trafficking****Nickie Aiken:**[\[65017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department made of the potential effect on access to justice for victims of trafficking prior to the introduction of the legal aid fixed fee for asylum and immigration legal aid work.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Lord Chancellor is committed to ensuring that everyone can access justice and has a statutory duty as set out in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO 2012) to ensure that legal aid funding is available for the civil legal services set out in Schedule 1 of LASPO 2012.

The legal aid fee scheme for asylum and immigration work is payable for all immigration and asylum matters that are in scope of LASPO, and the new fixed fees for immigration and asylum appeals apply to all legally-aided appeals before the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber).

These new, temporary fees were introduced as part of our swift response to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that the tribunal system could continue to function and vulnerable clients could still access justice. As such our consideration on access to justice was based on the immigration and asylum system as a whole rather than individual appellants or appeal types. The Lord Chancellor has already committed to a formal consultation before any permanent fee is set.

## ■ Crimes of Violence and Homicide: Ethnic Groups

**Philip Davies:****[64872]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the ethnicity was of (a) the perpetrator and (b) the victim in each case of (i) grievous bodily harm/unlawful wounding, (ii) grievous bodily harm/wounding with intent and (iii) attempted murder in each of the last three years.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Ministry of Justice has published data on the number of prosecutions and convictions, including the ethnicity of the defendants, in England & Wales up to December 2019. This data is available here:

*Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx)

Select 'Offence' and search: (i) '8F Wound/ inflict grievous bodily harm without intent', (ii) '5A Wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm' and (iii) '2 Attempted murder'. Open the field list (click anywhere on the table) then drag and drop the 'Ethnicity' variable from the 'filters' box into the 'rows' box.

The total number of convictions for defendants of each ethnic group since 2013 will be shown in rows 39-44.

The Ministry of Justice does not hold information on victim characteristics unless specified in statute.

## ■ Magistrates: Retirement

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[65895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his oral contribution of 9 June 2020, Official Record, column 150, to the hon. Member for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, on retirement ages for magistrates, what form will the proposed consultation take; when that consultation will (a) open and (b) close; what degree of urgency will be applied in the light of the backlog of cases resulting from the effects on the court system of the covid-19 pandemic; and if he will make it his policy temporarily to suspend the existing retirement age for (i) magistrates and (ii) the wider judiciary, in order to process that backlog in a timely manner.

**Chris Philp:**

We will be issuing a public consultation on proposals to raise the mandatory retirement age for most judicial office holders, including magistrates in the near future.

Many judges can already be authorised to sit past the mandatory retirement age but this provision does not exist for magistrates. Primary legislation would be required to amend the mandatory retirement age or to enable magistrates to temporarily sit beyond the existing mandatory retirement age.

## ■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships: Coronavirus

**Daniel Zeichner:**

[\[64214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether local authorities plan to (a) provide extensions to notice of marriages that have expired and (b) waive fees for replacement applications for expired notices as a result of covid-19.

**Alex Chalk:**

We understand the frustration couples who have had to postpone their wedding or civil partnership must be feeling.

The requirement to solemnize a marriage within twelve months of giving notice to marry is set out in primary legislation, which does not provide for extending this period. It would require primary legislation to change this. We are exploring what changes might be possible in relation to the law at this time.

The fees charged by local authorities for giving notice can be reduced, waived or refunded on compassionate grounds or in cases of hardship. It is for each local authority to determine when this can be applied.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Borders: Northern Ireland****Ruth Jones:**[\[64344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on border infrastructure in Northern Ireland in the event of the UK leaving the transition period without a deal.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Government remains optimistic and is working hard to reach an agreement with the EU on our future relationship. That is why we have agreed to an intensified talks process throughout July.

The Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol will be delivered by the end of the Transition Period. There will be no new physical customs infrastructure in Northern Ireland and we see no need to build any.

We will be making the necessary adjustments to existing entry points for agrifood goods to provide for proportionate additional controls, including some checks to help movements of live animals and agri-food from Great Britain into Northern Ireland. This is in order to respect the pre-existing status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit. We will also work closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, and with the EU in the Joint Committee, to seek to simplify and minimise any requirements.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is working closely with colleagues across Cabinet and with ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive in support of this, taking account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

**■ City Deals: Northern Ireland****Ruth Jones:**[\[64335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent assessment he has made of the progress on the delivery of Northern Ireland City Deals.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Prime Minister has set out his ambitious plan to invest in our future prosperity. Jobs, skills and infrastructure will be central to the UK Government's New Deal which will unleash the economic potential within every corner of the UK. As part of this, the UK Government intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and will work with the devolved administrations on our ambitious plan for economic recovery across the UK.

This ambition is also reflected in our commitment of £562m to City and Growth Deals across Northern Ireland (NI) which will drive economic growth and productivity in line with the key local priorities. The NI Executive has recently agreed to match the UK Government commitment to City and Growth Deals and the Inclusive Future Fund, bringing total investment to £1.2bn and highlighting what our partnership can achieve.

This partnership and long-term strategic investment will be vital in supporting Northern Ireland's economic recovery following the impact and challenges presented by Covid-19. The Councils and their delivery partners are therefore working at speed to ensure their projects reflect the best opportunities for investment. Whilst Covid-19 has required some reassessment of local priorities, we are confident that progress is being made across each of the deals. I continue to engage regularly with the Chief Executives of the City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland and my department is working closely with Councils and NI Executive colleagues to provide any support necessary to accelerate their implementation.

## SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### ■ Local Government: Constituencies

**Elliot Colburn:**

[R] [\[66982\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, when the Commission plans to lay before Parliament the draft Order to give affect to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's recommended boundary changes for the London Borough of Sutton.

**Christian Matheson:**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England published its final recommendations for future electoral arrangements in the London Borough of Sutton on 30 June. It expects to lay a draft order in September 2020 to bring the recommendations into effect. The draft order is subject to the 40-sitting days negative resolution procedure.

## TRANSPORT

### ■ Boats and Ferries: Rural Areas

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the roll-out of electric infrastructure to service (a) boat and (b) ferry transport in rural areas.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

In the Clean Maritime Plan, published last year, the UK Government committed to identifying and supporting zero emission shipping clusters. It is Government's ambition that clusters would combine innovation and infrastructure associated with zero emission propulsion technologies, including electrification, and that a number of clusters would be operational by 2035.

In line with this commitment, Government, in conjunction with a working group of the Clean Maritime Council, is undertaking a study on clusters. This study includes



consideration of electric infrastructure for the maritime sector across the UK as a whole.

The results of this study will be fed into national strategic cross-Government work, including the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

#### ■ **Bridges and Tunnels: Irish Sea**

**Allan Dorans:**

[\[65016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress the Government has made in the investigation of the feasibility of a road bridge or tunnel between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government announced on 30 June that it will work with devolved administrations to carry out a connectivity review, looking at how best to improve road, rail, air and sea links between our four nations.

#### ■ **Buses: Electric Vehicles and Hydrogen**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to accelerate the conversion of bus fleets to (a) electro and (b) hydrogen models.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government has supported the use of a range of low carbon bus technologies, including battery-electric technology, through funds including the Low Emission and Ultra Low Emission Bus Schemes. These have focussed not just on electric buses but also included funding for hydrogen buses and supporting infrastructure.

In February, the Government announced a £5 billion funding package for buses and cycling, which includes support for the purchase of at least 4,000 zero-emission buses. The details of these programmes, including technology options and how funding will be distributed, will be announced in due course.

Local Authorities had until 4 June to apply for a £50m package to deliver Britain's first All-Electric Bus Town. The winner(s) will be announced shortly.

I also know that my Rt Hon Friend the Transport Secretary is exploring options for a hydrogen bus town and a hydrogen hub, looking into how this country can lead the world using green hydrogen as a power source for types of transport, including freight, ships, buses and trains.

#### ■ **Cycling and Walking: Coronavirus**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on (a) repurposing traffic lanes and parking spaces for cycling and wider footways and (b) the issues that those authorities have faced in doing that work.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has regular discussions with local authorities at both Ministerial and official level on a range of transport related matters including cycling and walking. These discussions have informed the development of the Emergency Active Travel Fund, through which the Department is supporting local authorities with the introduction of measures of this sort, and the new network management duty guidance that the Department published on 9 May.

**■ Driving Instruction: Coronavirus****Dr Matthew Offord:****[64160]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish guidance on the resumption of driving lessons as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Driver and rider instruction can restart in England from Saturday 4 July 2020.

Car driving tests will restart in England on Wednesday 22 July 2020, which will give learner drivers time to have refresher lessons and practice before taking their test.

The DVSA would encourage all driving instructors to keep up to date with the driving instructors' [National Associations Strategic Partnership](#) (NASP) website for further advice and information.

**■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus****Bill Wiggin:****[64090]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with driving examiners to help young people pass their driving tests who have been held back due to covid-19.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been to protect the public and save lives. That remains its priority as it restarts its services.

Driver and rider instruction can restart in England from 4 July 2020.

Car driving tests will restart in England on Wednesday 22 July 2020, which will give learner drivers time to have refresher lessons and practice before taking their test.

Driving examiners are receiving information on the resumption of driving lessons and tests through their local communication channels.

**■ Electric Scooters: Safety****Craig Tracey:****[R] [64261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department plans to take to (a) monitor and (b) mitigate potential safety matters during the trial of e-scooters on roads.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department is preparing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for e-scooter trials which will assess safety impacts. The regulations to enable trials will set requirements for e-scooter users, among other changes, will set a maximum speed for e-scooters. We are also specifying minimum standards for the e-scooters participating in trials. These steps mitigate potential safety risks and we will keep this under review as trials progress.

■ **Jet Zero Council****John Spellar:**[\[64070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2020 to Question 59367 on the Jet Zero Council, whether the Council membership will include trades union representatives of the workers in that industry.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

As I noted on 23 June, we are engaging with stakeholders regarding membership of the Jet Zero Council. We will of course want to engage with a range of key stakeholders as part of this work, including trade union representatives.

Full details and the Council's Terms of Reference will be announced shortly.

■ **Motor Vehicles****Sally-Ann Hart:**[\[65031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the level of penalties issued to people that modify (a) motorcycle and (b) vehicle exhausts.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government takes the impact of road noise on health, wellbeing and the natural environment seriously and recognises that proportionate and dissuasive penalties are an effective way to minimise it. The Department is continuing to research into whether noise enforcement can be automated using an acoustic camera system.

A review of the current penalties for all vehicles may need to be considered if acoustic camera systems prove to be a reliable and efficient way of enforcing noise limits.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Insurance****Craig Tracey:**[\[R\] \[64259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reconcile the different requirements of Sections 143(i) and 185 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 with Articles 1 and 3 of the Motor Insurance Directive 2009 with reference to the 2014 European Court of Justice judgment in Vnuk.

**Craig Tracey:**

[R] [\[64260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will take steps to ensure that the Motor Insurers' Bureau is not required to compensate injured parties beyond its obligations under the Road Traffic Act.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The issue of the impact of the Vnuk judgment on motor insurance in the UK is an important one. We understand the implications on motor sports, motorists and other road users, and the concerns raised by the insurance industry including the Motor Insurers Bureau. During the transition period, EU law continues to apply to the UK through the EU Withdrawal Act and options for after that period will be for Government to decide.

#### ■ **Motorcycles: Bus Lanes**

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[64902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to mandate local authorities to allow motorcycle and scooter access in combined bus and cycle routes.

**Mr Steve Baker:**

[\[64903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to mandate local authorities to provide secure two-wheeler parking that can be used by both motorcyclists and cyclists.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Local traffic authorities already have powers to allow motorcycles to use bus lanes in their areas, and to provide dedicated parking facilities for them. It is for them to decide what is appropriate for roads in their area. In making these decisions they will need to consider how to balance the needs of local residents, emergency services, local business and those who work in and visit the area.

#### ■ **Motorcycles: Coronavirus**

**Chris Law:**

[\[64219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish data on the use of motorcycles during the covid-19 outbreak in line with the data published by his Department entitled Transport use by mode: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Road traffic data on the use of motorcycles during the COVID-19 pandemic is not available.

Road traffic data published as part of 'Transport use by mode: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020' is based on approximately 275 automatic traffic counter sites, as used for the Quarterly Road Traffic National Statistics publication series.

As with the Quarterly series (where motorcycle traffic estimates are not published), the pattern and relative infrequency of motorcycle travel means that robust estimates

of change in use of this mode during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are unavailable.

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[64373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether an assessment has been made into the potential merits of providing access to extra traffic lanes and additional parking facilities for motorbikes after the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Local traffic authorities already have powers to allow motorcycles to use bus lanes in their areas, and to provide dedicated parking facilities for them. It is for them to decide what is appropriate for roads in their area. In making these decisions they will need to consider how to balance the needs of local residents, emergency services, local business and those who work in and visit the area.

**Mr Steve Baker:** [\[64901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to recognise and promote in Government transport communications the role of motorcycles and scooters as a socially-distanced and sustainable mode of transport during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department's guidance issued on 12 May refers to "Private cars and other vehicles" as an alternative to using public transport, and encourages the public to "consider all other forms of transport before using public transport". This would include private vehicles such as motorcycles and mopeds where the journey to be made is appropriate.

## ■ Package Holidays: Coronavirus

**Sarah Olney:** [\[64276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of relaxing the 14-day timeline for refunds within the Package Travel Regulations.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial (BEIS) Strategy has legislative responsibility for the Package Travel Regulations. My officials are in close contact with BEIS on this, but any changes to the Package Travel Regulations would be a decision for BEIS.

## ■ Public Transport

**Geraint Davies:** [\[64819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the number and proportion of people using public transport as their primary mode of transport in (a) the UK and (b) comparable countries.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The National Travel Survey (NTS) recorded that public transport was the primary mode of transport used for 9.6% of trips per person, per year in England in 2018.

Around 15% and 5% of people in England reported using the bus and train at least three times a week respectively in 2018 according to the NTS, equating to 8.2m and 2.7m people.

Data is not held for other countries, including other countries in the UK.

**Public Transport: Coronavirus****Geraint Davies:****[64821]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that public transport workers (a) feel safe going to work and (b) are given priority access to covid-19 testing.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department is working closely with the wider transport sector, including operators and trade unions, on the implementation of the Safer Transport guidance that aims to help organisations, agencies and others (such as self-employed transport providers) understand how to provide safe workplaces and services (the guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>).

The guidance sets out how employers can advise staff and passengers on maintaining good hand hygiene and on ways to keep their distance from other people as much as possible, including, for example, through using screens, staggering departures and arrival times, and reducing the use of face to face seating if possible.

It also outlines that staff should wear a face covering when they are unable to maintain social distancing in passenger facing roles, while recognising that there will be exceptional circumstances when a staff member cannot wear a face covering, or when their task makes it sensible (based on a risk assessment) for them not to wear a face covering.

The Secretary of State for Transport is committed to ensuring that every transport worker who requires testing has access. The Department is engaging closely with stakeholders and DHSC to ensure that a robust testing process is in place for transport workers, whilst recognising that priority needs to be given to patient care, front-line healthcare staff and social care workers. Everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with COVID-19 symptoms can get tested. Antigen testing, or testing for current infection, is currently available through home delivery kits, regional test sites, satellite sites and mobile testing centres throughout the country.

**Geraint Davies:**[\[64822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of increasing public transport service frequency to enable the same number of passengers to travel on that transport while applying the 1 metre rule as travelled on it prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On 23 May, the Transport Secretary announced a further £283 million to help increase bus and light rail services across England as quickly as possible to help ensure there is enough space for passengers to observe social distancing guidelines, as we begin to re-open our economy.

The Government has approved £2.9bn of additional expenditure during the 2020/21 financial year to ensure that vital rail services continue to operate. This expenditure covers all train operators with franchise agreements with the Department.

To support Transport for London services we have agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing support package to enable them to continue operating essential services, transporting passengers safely and protecting staff during the pandemic and supporting the capital's gradual recovery from COVID-19.

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[64879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will set out a timetable for when and how the conditions on the use of public transport for non-essential journeys are going to be eased in line with scientific advice to reflect the balance of risk of covid-19 transmission.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Government advice is for the public to continue to work from home if they can. If they do need to travel for any reason, they should consider all other modes, including walking and cycling, before using public transport. We need to strike a balance between ensuring that we are able to control virus transmission while enabling the economic, social and environmental benefits that public transport brings. DfT regularly reviews and updates its guidance for passengers and operators based on all the evidence.

**Jonathan Gullis:**[\[65029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the adequacy of the level of funding for urban transport authorities.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On 23 May, the Transport Secretary announced a further £283 million to help increase bus and light rail 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 agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing support package for Transport for London to enable them to continue operating essential services, transporting passengers safely and protecting staff during the pandemic and supporting the capital's gradual recovery from COVID-19.

The Department will continue to work with transport authorities to understand how public transport services can adapt to any 'new normal' that emerges from the Covid-19 outbreak so that a sustainable long-term recovery can be made.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[65033]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department have to grant additional powers to urban transport authorities to respond effectively to the (a) covid-19 outbreak and (b) recovery period after that outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

We continue to consider the role additional powers could play in helping transport authorities to deliver their transport restart and recovery plans and to implement local lockdowns should these be required in the future.

Due to be published later this year, the White Paper on devolution will aim to connect local recovery into levelling up, to provide a transformative place-based strategy to boost regional economic performance as part of the UK-wide economic recovery and renewal response to Covid-19. The role of transport authorities in supporting this aim will be considered in parallel.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[65034]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives from (a) the Urban Transport Group and (b) urban transport authorities on the Government's plan for local transport as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Ministers and Officials have had regular meetings with key stakeholders, including the Urban Transport Group, Confederation for Passenger Transport, local transport authorities and transport operators in recent weeks to discuss a wide range of matters.

The Department will continue to work with stakeholders and transport authorities to understand how public transport services can adapt as covid-19 restrictions ease so that a sustainable long-term recovery can be made.

**Alexander Stafford:**

**[65035]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on the funding challenges faced by urban transport authorities.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On 23 May, the Transport Secretary announced a further £283 million to help increase bus and light rail 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 agreed a £1.6 billion funding and financing support package for Transport for London to enable them to continue operating essential services, transporting passengers safely and protecting staff during the pandemic and supporting the capital's gradual recovery from COVID-19.

The Department will continue to work with transport authorities to understand how public transport services can adapt to any 'new normal' that emerges from the Covid-19 outbreak so that a sustainable long-term recovery can be made.

### ■ Railways: Fares

**Mr Ben Bradshaw:**

[\[64845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government plans to increase regulated rail fares by RPI from January 2021 based on July's RPI figure.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government's plans for regulated rail fares will be communicated in due course.

### ■ Road Traffic: Coronavirus

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of peak-spreading commuter traffic.

**Rachel Maclean:**

As the transport sector is restarted, DfT continues to work closely with Cabinet Office, BEIS, DHSC and others to develop contingency plans and to identify areas where there is increased risk of congestion or crowding.

The Department continues to recommend that the public avoids using public transport if possible and encouraging those travelling by public transport or in cars to avoid travelling in the peak to maximise capacity for key workers and the supply of goods.

The Department is also encouraging employers to continue home working and staggering start times so that demand can be reduced.

Departmental analysis to date shows that demand in the interpeak is currently higher than the traditional morning (and afternoon) peak.

**TREASURY****■ Bank Cards: Fees and Charges****Mr Richard Holden:**[\[64375\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to monitor and regulate card payment fees charged by banks for transactions involving small retailers.

**Mr Richard Holden:**[\[64382\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of forcing banks to freeze card payment fees temporarily, for transactions involving small retailers in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

The Government remains committed to helping businesses and workers through the present very difficult time, and has announced unprecedented support, including a range of grant and tax deferral schemes, and £300 billion of guarantees, equivalent to 15 per cent of UK GDP. Some acquirers (the financial services firms which enable retailers to process card payments) are taking voluntary measures to support their business customers, for example through waiving fees, and the Government welcomes such action.

The Payment Systems Regulator is currently carrying out a market review into card-acquiring services. Its review is examining how competition is working, including looking at the fees retailers pay for card-acquiring services and the quality of service they receive. Its interim findings will be published in Q3 2020.

**■ Business: Coronavirus****Gareth Thomas:**[\[64827\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses unable to access Government schemes such as the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan due to Sharia law restrictions on taking interest bearing loans.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government is committed to financial inclusion and the principle that no UK customer should be denied access to competitive financial products because of their faith.

The Government's priority in designing support schemes for businesses has been to help as many people as possible as quickly as possible. The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme does not currently have any Sharia-compliant accredited lenders, but those that wish to become accredited can do so through contacting the British Business Bank. We continue to listen and meet with finance providers, keeping all policies under review, to ensure they remain fit for purpose. We also welcome

varied feedback to identify issues that need to be addressed in policy design and coverage.

Sharia compliant businesses have been able to access Sharia compliant finance through the Government-backed Start Up Loan scheme. They have also been able to apply for support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help them retain employees, as well as benefit from other support measures such as business rates relief and deferral of VAT payments.

## ■ Consumer Goods: Payments

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[64212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect of Government guidance on contactless payments on the level of access to (a) goods and (b) services for people who do not have a bank account.

**John Glen:**

One of the impacts of the Covid-19 virus has been a decline in cash withdrawals and usage. Current BEIS guidance to retailers for working safely during COVID-19 advises minimising contact around transactions, for example, considering using contactless payments. The Government and regulators are closely engaged with industry on an ongoing basis to monitor risks to the cash system.

The Government recognises that many businesses and individuals rely on cash in their daily lives. At the March 2020 Budget, the Chancellor announced that Government will bring forward legislation to protect access to cash. The Government is engaging with regulators and industry while designing legislation, ensuring that the approach reflects the needs of cash users across the economy.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Geraint Davies:** [\[64047\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make a comparative assessment of the cost to the public purse of the production of pm2.5 filtration masks for people in the most polluted areas and covid-19 associated deaths in those areas.

**Steve Barclay:**

No such comparative assessment has been made at this time.

## ■ Free Zones: East Midlands

**Ben Bradley:** [\[64314\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with the Local Enterprise Partnership for Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on the potential for an East Midlands Freeport based around East Midlands Airport.

**Steve Barclay:**

As part of the consultation process, the Government has been engaging widely with ports, businesses and local communities – including events attended by the LEP for

Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire - to hear stakeholders' views on our Freeports proposals. The Freeport consultation is currently open, and I would encourage anyone with an interest in Freeports to submit a response through the gov.uk portal before it closes on 13 July.

## ■ **Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[64046\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a zero rate of vehicle excise duty for (a) electric and (b) hydrogen vehicles.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

For the purposes of Vehicle Excise Duty, Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs) are nil rated, both for first year registration and annual licences.

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that ZEVs registered before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 would also be exempt from the expensive car supplement.

## ■ **Overseas Aid**

**John Redwood:**

[\[64039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, given how the overseas aid budget is determined, what adjustment will be made to the value of that budget in 2020-21 to reflect the fall in GDP.

**Steve Barclay:**

The UK has a legal commitment to spend 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) each year on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The government reviews the ODA funding it allocates to projects on a regular basis in order to ensure delivery of its commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA. Since this commitment is linked to the size of the economy, the level of ODA spend is likely to decrease this year.

## ■ **Remittances**

**Sir Graham Brady:**

[\[64077\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to require transparency in the (a) fees and (b) charges applied to international (i) payments and (ii) remittances; and if he will include in those proposals, reference to the exchange rate margin, calculated from the interbank exchange rate.

**John Glen:**

Since April 2020, provisions of the amended Cross Border Payments Regulation (also known as CBPR2), which require transparency of currency conversion fees and charges, have applied in the United Kingdom. These provisions require that where a currency conversion is offered at a Point of Sale, ATM, or when making a credit transfer, the full cost of any fees and charges is shown as a percentage mark up over the latest foreign exchange reference rates issued by the European Central Bank.

This is intended to enable consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing currency conversion services.

CBPR2 is a directly applicable EU regulation which continues to apply in the United Kingdom during the Transition Period under the terms of the EU Withdrawal Agreement. Before the end of the Transition Period, the Government will bring forward secondary legislation under the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 to ensure that these provisions continue to work effectively in UK law after the end of the Transition Period.

## ■ Rolls-Royce

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[64223]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2020 to Question 56024 on Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus, what discussions his Department had with Rolls-Royce and on what dates those discussions took place.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery. Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[64224]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2020 to Question 56024 on Manufacturing Industries: Coronavirus, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a Government task-force in relation to UK-based Rolls-Royce jobs.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government regularly speaks with manufacturing companies and has worked closely with Rolls Royce in response to COVID-19. Rolls Royce is making use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) which has so far protected 9.2 million workers and 1.1 million businesses through this crisis (as at midnight 21 June 2020). Rolls has also drawn £300m of short-term finance from the Coronavirus Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF).

Where firms make the decision that they cannot retain all of their staff over the longer run, we are ensuring that those looking for work are supported through a significant package of temporary welfare measures. This includes: £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1bn increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants. These changes will benefit all new and existing claimants.

## ■ Travel: Insurance

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[64191\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that competitively priced travel insurance is available to elderly people with chronic diseases.

**John Glen:**

The Government is in continual dialogue with the insurance sector to understand and influence its contribution to handling this unprecedented situation.

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.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

## ■ Diabetes: Coronavirus

**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**

[\[65096\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to her Department's new story, Next steps for work on covid-19 disparities announced, published on 4 June 2020, whether the planned review of the effectiveness and effect of steps being undertaken by government departments and their agencies will address diabetes under the planned assessment of co-morbidities; and if she will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

I can confirm that next steps work on covid-19 disparities will include diabetes as a factor to be considered.

## ■ Gay Conversion Therapy

**Afzal Khan:**

[\[65010\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 59593 on Gay Conversion Therapy, what her timetable is for reviewing the findings of the draft report; and when she plans to publish the final report.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government received a draft of the research report on Friday 12th June 2020, and is currently reviewing the findings. We will publish the report in due course, once the draft has been considered and the report is completed.



## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

**John Healey:**

**[54000]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many on-site inspections of businesses have been carried out by the Health and Safety Executive relating to covid-19 since 1 January 2020 to date, by (a) week and (b) local authority area.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 8 June 2020]:* The number of proactive site inspections that have been carried out which have addressed Covid-19 issues is not readily identifiable.

The majority of Covid-19 related site inspections have arisen from the investigation of a concern raised by workers or a member of the public. In April 2020, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) introduced a change to its recording system to identify visits that addressed a concern relating to Covid-19. Hence, it is not possible to identify site visits made before then. In addition to the numbers below, where a concern is not specifically related to Covid-19 but such issues are identified, then action will be taken to address them.

HSE does not record the date of an investigation visit in an easily retrievable format. The table below identifies the numbers of visits based upon the month in which the visit report was created on their operational database.

DATE	NUMBER OF SITE VISITS
April	15
May	48
June	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>64</b>

The following table provides site visits by Local Authority:

SITE LOCAL AUTHORITY	SITE VISITS
Mid Devon	5
Canterbury	4
Glasgow UA	3
Medway Towns UA	3
Wellingborough	2

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SITE LOCAL AUTHORITY	SITE VISITS
Hull City UA	2
Flintshire UA	2
City of Westminster	2
Brentwood	2
Burnley	2
Midlothian UA	2
Thanet	2
East Ayrshire UA	2
Surrey Heath	1
Brighton & Hove UA	1
Torbay UA	1
Plymouth UA	1
Sevenoaks	1
Manchester	1
Kingston-upon-Thames	1
Greenwich	1
Corby	1
Folkstone and Hythe	1
Portsmouth UA	1
Tower Hamlets	1
Aberdeen City UA	1
Reading	1
Maidstone	1
Not Applicable	1
Bradford	1
Bristol UA	1

SITE LOCAL AUTHORITY	SITE VISITS
Tonbridge & Malling	1
North Ayrshire UA	1
North Lanarkshire UA	1
Cardiff UA	1
Guildford	1
Waltham Forest	1
Kensington & Chelsea	1
South Lanarkshire UA	1
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1
West Lothian UA	1
Leicester UA	1
York	1
Northampton	1

*NB: the above data was extracted from an operational database on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and is subject to change e.g. due to the delay between a site visit and recording the information into the database.*

## ■ Universal Credit

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[64331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of recent trends in the average levels of household debt for people in receipt of universal credit.

**Will Quince:**

Claimants may find themselves in debt for a variety of reasons, many of which can pre-date their claim to Universal Credit. The Department encourages people out of work, or on a low income, to consider whether claiming Universal Credit could provide them with additional support before issues, such as debt, spiral out of control. We promote Universal Credit through various external channels, including through the 'Understanding Universal Credit' website, to help people navigate the range of support available and provide information about how to apply.

Work Coaches are trained to gauge claimants' financial needs from their first contact and can refer them to more specialist support for personal budgeting, money guidance and debt advice if required, including through the Money and Pensions

Service (MaPS). MaPS has a statutory responsibility to deliver free and impartial money and pensions guidance and debt advice to anyone that needs it. It is also required to have regard to the needs of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Our own analysis shows that Universal Credit in fact reduces debts such as rent arrears. Supporting research carried out by the National Federation of ALMOs, shows over three quarters of their tenants come onto Universal Credit with pre-existing rent arrears. It also shows that arrears tend to increase prior to making a claim for Universal Credit, and that Universal Credit actually appears to be helping to clear arrears over time.

### ■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

**Neil Coyle:**

**[66066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has issued to Jobcentres on the reintroduction of benefit sanctions on universal credit claimants as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Mims Davies:**

*[Holding answer 2 July 2020]:* We are issuing guidance to support our re-implementation of Claimant Commitments in July. We are managing this in a phased approach to deliver a tailored and effective service for our customers, recognising the individual and prevailing circumstances including COVID restrictions. We have not needed to issue new guidance on benefit sanctions. We trust and empower our job centre managers and work coaches to work with their customers appropriately.