

Daily Report

Wednesday, 8 July 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 8 July 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:38 P.M., 08 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

■ Fracking

Barry Gardiner:

[68645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the University of Stirling on the Government's response to public health concerns on shale gas exploration, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in July 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We are committed to ensuring a rigorous, evidence-based approach to shale gas extraction, and as such welcome any new research that can further enhance our understanding and help inform our policy development.

On the basis of the current scientific evidence, Government has confirmed that it will take a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consents in England, which are required before hydraulic fracturing operations can take place. This position, an effective moratorium, will be maintained unless compelling new evidence is provided which addresses the concerns around the prediction and management of induced seismicity.

■ UK Research and Innovation

Chi Onwurah:

[68693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) budget will be published; and what proportion of the £22 billion spend on research and development in 2024-25 will be allocated to UKRI.

Amanda Solloway:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's research and development allocations for 2020/2021 were published on 29th May 2020 and are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beis-research-and-development-rd-budget-allocations-2020-to-2021/beis-research-and-development-budget-allocations-2020-to-2021>.

Information on future years' allocations will be published following the Spending Review.

Chi Onwurah:

[68697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of (a) applicants and (b) successful applicants of the 2020 Strength in Places pathfinder programme came from (i) the North East, (ii) London and (iii) the South East.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Strength in Places Fund (SIPF) is a new competitive funding scheme that funds consortia of research organisations, businesses and local leadership, to carry out research and innovation activities that will have specific local economic impacts.

The SIPF operates a two-stage process, where consortia first submit shorter expressions of interest (EoI) bids, and the SIPF assessment panel makes recommendations to UKRI. Funded EoI bids receive up to £50k seedcorn funding to support development of full stage bids, which are then reviewed by the same assessment panel. The panel makes recommendations for both stages of funding against the published SIPF assessment criteria available on the UKRI website based on the strength of the bids.

The proportion of applicants and successful applicants for Wave 1 of the SIPF by NUTS1 categories at each of the stages is outlined below. These are defined by lead applicants, as SIPF projects are carried out by consortia, there will be partners within these projects that are in different NUTS1 classifications to the lead applicant.

Wave 2 of the programme is currently under way, with the announcement of successful EoIs for funding proposals scheduled for Summer 2020. SIPF is only part of a wider portfolio of funding streams delivered to organisations across the country through UKRI that places can benefit from.

Table 1

	TOTAL ELIGIBLE BIDS ^A RECEIVED (/85)	BID DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AWARDED (/23)	FULL STAGE FUNDING AWARDED (/7)
North East	5	3	0
Greater London	4	1	0
South East	5	1	1
East Midlands	5	1	0
East of England	4	2	0
North West	7	2	1
Northern Ireland	5	1	1
Scotland	19	4	2
South West	15	3	1

Wales	6	1	1
West Midlands	4	1	0
Yorkshire and Humber	6	3	0

Notes on data supplied in Table 1

^a The data provided refers to eligible SIPF bids, in line with the published programme assessment criteria.

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Cabinet Office: Coronavirus**

John McDonnell:

[66801]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the policy paper of 9 June 2020 entitled Procurement Policy Note 04/20: Recovery and Transition from COVID-19, what assessment he has made of the (a) potential merits of continuing to provide contractual relief as a result of covid-19 in line with Procurement Policy Notice 02/20, (b)(i) companies and (ii) work areas that will be affected by a change in contractual relief and (c) timetable for those changes.

Chloe Smith:

As the Government moves into the next phase of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the supplier relief provisions set out in [PPN 02/20](#) may still be appropriate and contracting authorities have the final decision on whether they deem a supplier at risk and the form of any relief.

[PPN 04/20](#) allows Contracting Authorities to continue paying in full for services if suppliers are deemed at risk.

■ **Coronavirus: Social Distancing**

Andrew Rosindell:

[65091]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to increase awareness of the details of the Government's guidelines on meeting friends and family and the need to maintain social distancing with people outside of support bubbles.

Chloe Smith:

The government recognises how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their family and friends in recent months. This has been necessary to help us all control the virus and save lives. We have published detailed guidance on gov.uk which explains how you can now see people you do not live with, while protecting yourself and others from coronavirus.

We developed a national cross-government campaign to increase awareness of all coronavirus-related guidance and provide information and reassurance to the public.

The campaign uses national advertising including TV, social media, radio, poster and signage advertising as well as other media channels in all four nations of the UK.

We have also partnered with over 600 national, regional and local newspaper titles to help amplify public information on critical coronavirus messaging and ensure it reaches all communities.

■ **Dominic Cummings**

David Linden: [\[66964\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the names of civil service staff who report directly to Mr Dominic Cummings.

Chloe Smith:

Paragraph 5 of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers sets out their role in relation to the exercise of management functions.

■ **Government Assistance: Northern Ireland**

Colum Eastwood: [\[67002\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussion he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the rules on state aid that will apply to Northern Ireland after the end of the transition period in the event that the UK does not follow EU state aid rules.

Penny Mordaunt:

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed.

■ **Infrastructure: Foreign Investment in UK**

Dan Jarvis: [\[68707\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to review the policy of enabling foreign (a) governments and (b) companies to invest in critical national infrastructure.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government considers national security implications arising from foreign investment on a case-by-case basis.

On 22 June this Government laid secondary legislation to amend the Enterprise Act 2002, strengthening the Government's powers to intervene in certain investments made into the UK.

The Government will also bring forward the National Security and Investment Bill when Parliamentary time allows. As announced in the Queen's Speech, the Bill will upgrade the Government's powers to scrutinise investments and consider the risks that can arise from hostile parties acquiring ownership of, or control over, businesses or other entities and assets that have national security implications.

List of Ministerial Responsibilities: Coronavirus**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[68673\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 63246 on List of Ministerial Responsibilities: Coronavirus and the Answers to Questions 57317, 43737, 38867, 27615, 27613, 25033, 23666, 23630, 21909 and 5342, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of updating the responsibilities section of Minister's profiles on the gov.uk website to reflect changes to ministerial responsibilities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQs [65138-65157](#) on 1 July 2020.

Warnings: Mobile Phones**Damian Collins:** [\[68688\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to establish a public warning system using mobile phone technology that includes native language options for residents and people visiting from overseas.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government is reviewing the opportunities of a mobile alerting capability to issue alerts to mobile devices. The Government recognises the need for messages to be easily understood by everyone receiving them.

DEFENCE**Veterans: Coronavirus****Peter Grant:** [\[68730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the news story on the Veterans UK section of gov.uk entitled, COVID-19: changes to Veterans UK Services, published on 19 March, what steps he is taking to ensure that Veterans UK will be able to offer their full range of services as soon as possible as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Johnny Mercer:

Veterans UK has helped over 13,000 veterans since 23 March 2020.

All regular War Pension, War Widows Pension, Armed Forces Compensation and Armed Forces Pension payments continue to be paid into nominated bank accounts.

The full range of veterans' support services, including the Veterans UK Helpline and Welfare Service, has continued to be provided throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and all requests for help have been responded to.

Veterans Welfare Service and Defence Transition Services have continued to operate remotely and provide all services except face to face meetings. Work is

ongoing to assess when the face to face service might be able to begin again and will be based on Government Guidance and risk assessments for staff and veterans.

Staff have been returning in a progressive manner to the office since this became possible by implementing the Government advice and maintaining social distancing in the workplace.

Veterans UK are currently in the process of assessing outstanding workloads and developing a recovery programme to process new and existing claims and appeals as quickly as possible.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts: Coronavirus

Tracy Brabin:

[\[66160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to provide further information on his Department's proposed sector deal for the arts in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Tracy Brabin:

[\[66162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the extent to which his Department's plans for responding to the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the arts align with the Government's so-called levelling up agenda.

Caroline Dinanage:

We recognise that these are incredibly challenging times for arts and culture organisations, and the Government will continue to support the sector through the unprecedented financial measures we have announced. DCMS has worked closely with its arm's-length bodies to deliver tailored support packages at speed, including the £160m Emergency Funding Package announced by Arts Council England, made possible by Government funding.

Alongside this, DCMS continues to engage with the sector extensively to best understand the challenges faced. We are working closely with the Arts Council to consider the additional support that may be needed to support the long-term recovery of the sector.

■ Charities: Gift Aid

Martyn Day:

[\[67702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to help increase levels of revenue contributed through Gift Aid to support the civil society sector.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government is committed to supporting charities through Gift Aid; Gift Aid claimed by charities was worth around £1.3billion in 2018-19. Gift Aid already results in full tax relief on the tax paid on donations, with basic rate relief being claimed by the charity and higher rate relief being claimed by the taxpayer where relevant. Increasing the rate at which Gift Aid is paid would break the link with the basic rate of Income Tax paid on qualifying donations. Additionally, less than 20% of UK charities claim Gift Aid, so any increased payments linked to this tax relief would only benefit a small proportion of charities, with most being paid to a very small number of the very largest charities.

There is ongoing work between the Government and charities to improve eligible Gift Aid take-up and ensure that Gift Aid is fit for the future, and we understand the need to raise awareness among charities and donors of the benefits of Gift Aid.

Entertainments: Coronavirus**Emma Hardy:**[\[66969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department plans to set up a taskforce on the reopening of live entertainment venues after the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will take steps to ensure that representatives of the National Arena Association, the Concert Promoters Association and the British Association of Concert Halls sit on such a taskforce.

Caroline Dinanage:

The ministerially-chaired Events and Entertainment Working Group was established to support the Secretary of State's Cultural Renewal Taskforce. It focuses on developing covid-19 secure guidance to enable the safe reopening of the performing arts, music and entertainment sectors.

The National Arenas Association and the Concert Promoters Association are active and valued members of the Working Group, and DCMS is in regular dialogue with a range of stakeholders from across the live entertainment sector.

Mass Media and Telecommunications: Equality**Ruth Jones:**[\[64334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help improve diversity in the media and telecommunications sector.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government recognises that the media and telecommunications sectors play a vital role in British society and therefore have an important responsibility to reflect the reality of modern Britain.

Promoting greater diversity is a priority for the government and therefore we welcome the work Ofcom has undertaken - as the independent communications regulator - through their annual diversity reports on broadcasting; as well as the work of Project Diamond, an initiative supported by the broadcasters, which captures diversity data.

The government is committed to working together with industry to support greater diversity and to ensure that everyone regardless of their background should have the same opportunity to be successful and to go as far as their talents and hard work take them.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Karin Smyth:

[\[68729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on facilitating the safe re-opening of (a) gymnastics and (b) trampolining centres in England as the 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 and the government is committed to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so. The government has announced that indoor fitness and dance studios, and indoor gyms and sports venues/facilities would remain closed but since 4 July other indoor facilities, including some indoor games, recreation and certain entertainment venues have reopened.

The Secretary of State has established a task force to work with the sport and leisure sector to help them become COVID-secure and re-open as soon as possible. As with all aspects of the government's response to COVID-19, we will be guided by public health considerations to ensure that as restrictions are eased people can return to activity safely.

■ Swimming Pools: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[64919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to review the date for the re-opening of swimming pools as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance his Department has published on swimming pools reopening during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government recognises the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by an understanding of the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

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

Fleur Anderson:

[67798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to permit the reopening of (a) small tuition and (b) therapy swimming pools as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased; and whether the reopening of those pools will be earlier than the reopening of larger leisure centre swimming pools.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government recognises the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by an understanding of the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this in the coming weeks.

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

EDUCATION

■ After School Clubs: Social Distancing

Royston Smith:

[66925]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of effect on the feasibility of social distancing due to the covid-19 outbreak at after-school clubs operating at schools from September of the (a) number of children attending and (b) the number of children from different school bubbles attending those clubs.

Royston Smith:

[66926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to schools running after-school clubs on the reopening of schools during the covid-19 outbreak in September.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has published guidance on the full opening of schools from September. It advises that schools should consider resuming any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. Such provision will help ensure pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the school, ensure vulnerable children have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons, provide enrichment activities, and also support working parents. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

We recognise that this will be logistically challenging for schools. Schools should carefully consider how they can make such provision work alongside the wider protective measures the guidance supports them to put in place, including keeping children within the year groups or smaller bubbles they are in during the school day, where possible. If it is not possible to maintain bubbles being used during the school day then schools should use small, consistent groups in their breakfast and after-school activities.

Schools can consult the guidance produced for summer holiday childcare, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>, as much of this will be useful in planning extra-curricular provision. This includes schools advising parents to limit the number of different wraparound providers they access, as far as possible.

■ Assessments: Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[63473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 41160 on Assessments: Coronavirus, if he will publish the feedback from stakeholders on the range of options available to his Department on the Reception Baseline Assessment.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has listened to the feedback from stakeholders about the difficult circumstances faced by schools in the context of COVID-19 and the particular impact this has had on schools preparedness for the implementation of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) in September 2020.

Taking into account that feedback, the Department has confirmed that the statutory implementation of the RBA will be postponed until autumn 2021. Instead, schools have the option of taking part in the RBA early adopter year and can sign up to participate via a survey sent to all eligible schools. The Department remains committed to implementing the RBA.

■ Black Curriculum

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[68686]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many requests he has received to meet with the The Black Curriculum; and what plans he has to meet with that organisation.

Nick Gibb:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education received a request directly from The Black Curriculum organisation asking for a meeting and a response has been sent. At this stage, the Department's work responding to the COVID-19 outbreak and other diary pressures make it difficult for the Secretary of State to arrange a meeting. However, the Secretary of State's reply makes clear that officials

have met with the organisation previously and are happy to meet with them again to discuss these matters.

■ Children: Day Care

Gill Furniss:

[68746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that key workers have access to childcare during school summer holidays.

Vicky Ford:

As my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirmed in his announcement on 23 June, community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children will be able to operate over the summer holiday with safety measures in place. Adjustments to the measures for out-of-school provision were taken as part of Step 3 of the government's recovery strategy from Saturday 4 July. This guidance covers tuition and learning centres, extracurricular clubs (such as football coaching), uniformed youth organisations (such as Scouts and Guides), supplementary schools, private language schools and religious schools offering education (such as madrassahs, yeshivas, and Sunday schools).

Before the end of the summer term, while state schools in their local area are open, out-of-school provision will only be able to operate for children from the eligible and priority groups, including vulnerable children, children of critical workers and select year groups (early years, Reception, year 1 and year 6). However, during the summer holiday period, out-of-school provision can open to all children, provided they put in place the appropriate protective measures, which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

■ Children: Social Services

Tulip Siddiq:

[66942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to recent changes made to children's social care regulations during the covid-19 outbreak, if he will make it his policy to (a) undertake public consultations on any further proposed changes to children's social care regulations and (b) adhere to the Government's guidance on consultation principles in any future such consultations.

Vicky Ford:

I will make a statement to Parliament before summer recess on the Adoption and Children (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. In line with the government's guidance on consultation principles, the department continues to engage with a range of stakeholders on these regulations, including seeking information on how the regulations are being used. This process will continue and will inform my statement to Parliament.

■ Department for Education: Written Questions**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[66828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to answer Named Day Question 60715 on Free School Meals, tabled by the hon. Member for Washington and Sunderland West on 17 June 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Written parliamentary question 60715 was answered on 1 July 2020.

■ Education: Coronavirus**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[66898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing children to repeat a year in school if their parents feel they have fallen behind as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

We do not currently anticipate that, as a general rule, children and young people will need to repeat a school year as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. However, it remains possible for headteachers to agree this in individual cases, if they think it is appropriate. It is important for parents to remember that all children in any year group will be in the same position and schools will be planning carefully to take this into account in their teaching and their support for pupils as they return.

We have announced a package of support worth £1 billion to ensure that schools have the support they need to help children and young people make up for lost teaching time, with extra support in the form of a tutoring programme for those who need it most. This package of measures includes:

- A universal catch up premium for schools of £650 million to help them make up for lost teaching time.
- A new £350m National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils.

Once a child has been admitted to a school it is for the headteacher to decide how best to educate them.

Stuart Anderson:[\[66981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of education for children receiving remote tuition due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is continuing to assess the impact of school closure on children and young people's educational attainment.

We have published a comprehensive range of advice and guidance to support schools during this time. This includes a list of high-quality online resources, which have been assessed with support from some of the country's leading educational experts, to help pupils learn at home.

We have worked with schools to produce case studies guidance on remote education practice. This guidance provides an opportunity for schools to learn from each other's emerging practice as they develop their own approaches.

We are supporting sector-led initiatives such as the Oak National Academy. This new enterprise has been created by 40 teachers from schools across England. It will provide 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to year 10. By 28 June, 4.1 million unique users had accessed the Oak National Academy website and 14.7 million lessons had been viewed.

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

We have committed over £100 million to boost remote education, this includes: providing devices and internet access for those who need it most, ensuring every school that wants it has access to free, expert technical support to get set up on Google for Education or Microsoft's Office 365 Education, and offering peer support from schools and colleges leading the way with the use of education technology.

We expect all pupils to return to school in the autumn, and the Department published guidance on 2 July. Given the possibility that groups of pupils need to self-isolate, such as for a local lockdown, all schools will also be expected to have remote education contingency plans in place by the end of September. The guidance sets out what is expected from schools for their remote education provision.

Laura Farris:

[67000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that children of people who are shielding during the covid-19 outbreak can (a) access education and (b) minimise risk of transmitting covid-19 to others in their household.

Nick Gibb:

During the summer term, we are advising children who live in a household with someone who is shielding to only attend school if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and if they are able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend. They should be supported to learn at home.

To aide this, we have published a list of high-quality online resources, which have been assessed with support from some of the country's leading educational experts, to help pupils learn at home. We have also worked with schools to produce case studies guidance on remote education practice. This guidance provides an opportunity for schools to learn from each other's emerging practice as they develop their own approaches.

In addition, we are supporting sector-led initiatives such as the Oak National Academy. This new enterprise has been created by 40 teachers from schools across England. It will provide 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to year 10. By 21 June, 3.9 million unique users had accessed the Oak National Academy website and 13.2 million lessons had been viewed.

The BBC has also developed resources for families as part of a comprehensive new education package, which is now available on TV and online at BBC Bitesize.

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

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

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID-19. This means that even the small number of pupils who remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

Our guidance for fully reopening schools in the autumn sets out a 'system of controls' which schools should adopt to minimise the risk of transmission. Where schools apply the full measures in this guidance, the risks to all pupils and staff will be mitigated significantly, including those who were previously classed as extremely clinically vulnerable and clinically vulnerable. This guidance also sets out our expectations of the remote education schools should provide if a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, including if they are required to self-isolate or a local outbreak occurs.

This guidance can be found here:

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

Afzal Khan:

[67752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 lockdown on BAME families with children accessing their education from home.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has committed over £100 million to support remote education in England. The Department has published a comprehensive range of guidance to support schools during this time. This includes [a list of quality resources](#), and [case studies of remote education practice](#).

The [Oak National Academy](#) was launched on Monday 20 April. It is a new enterprise that has been created by 100 teachers from schools across England. It is providing at least 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from Reception through to Year 10. The BBC has developed a comprehensive new education package, including wellbeing content, available on TV, via the red button and iPlayer and online at [BBC Bitesize](#).

Schools can also apply for Government-funded support to access one of two free-to-use digital education platforms to enable online teaching such as, G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education.

To ensure all children benefit from these resources, we are providing laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers to vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people that do not already have a digital device or internet access. As of the end of June, over 202,000 laptops and tablets and over 47,000 4G wireless routers have been delivered to local authorities and academy trusts for distribution to the children and young people that need them.

The Department has launched a service to provide children and young people free access to BT Wi-Fi hotspots. 10,000 families will initially be able to access the scheme. This offer is currently being piloted and will be rolled out across England in the coming months. We are currently working with BT to expand this offer to allow more children to access the internet through their network of BT Wi-Fi hotspots.

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■ Free School Meals

Tulip Siddiq:

[67714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of extending eligibility for universal free school meals to primary school children in all year groups.

Vicky Ford:

All children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 in England's state-funded schools receive a free meal.

We spend around £600 million per year ensuring 1.4 million infants enjoy a free, healthy and nutritious meal at lunchtime following the introduction of the universal infant free school meals policy in 2014.

We have not estimated the cost of extending eligibility to primary school children in all year groups.

■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

Dan Jarvis:

[\[67655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of recent media reports of continuing technical problems affecting the free school meals national voucher scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

The government will continue to provide schools with their expected funding, including funding to cover benefits-related free school meals and universal infant free school meals, throughout this period. We are asking schools to support children who are eligible for and claiming benefits-related free school meals, by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We know that many schools are successfully delivering food parcels or arranging food collections for eligible children, and we encourage this approach. As schools open more widely, they should speak to their school catering team or provider about the best arrangements for school meals. Schools should ensure that catering teams and food suppliers are supported to return to school to provide meals both for those children attending school and for those remaining at home who are eligible for free school meals. If a school catering service cannot provide meals or food parcels for children who are at home, the school can continue to offer vouchers to families of eligible pupils if needed.

There were initial technical problems with the Edenred system, and government officials have been working tirelessly with Edenred to ensure these issues were resolved at pace. Substantial improvements have been made including a significant reduction in the waiting times for schools ordering and parents redeeming their codes.

Thousands of orders are being processed every week. Voucher codes are being distributed and families are redeeming them. Edenred has reported that over £205 million worth of voucher codes has been redeemed into supermarket eGift cards by schools and families as of 1 July and that over 18,000 schools had placed orders as of 23 June. We have been working closely with Edenred to further improve the scheme, and we thank schools using the system for their patience while it has been upgraded to meet the ongoing demand.

■ Further Education: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[66825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional financial support his Department is providing to colleges during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We have protected grant funding to the further education sector - the Education Skills and Funding Agency will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and for 2020/21.

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

The College Collaboration Fund (CCF) has been adapted to support colleges to respond to current challenges including developing new ways of working. We will let providers know the outcome of their application after 10 July.

We will be increasing investment in education and training of 16 to 19 year olds by £400 million for the 2020/21 academic year, including an increased base rate, and more funding for high cost and high value subjects. We are also investing £1.5 billion over five years in capital spending for further education colleges.

On 29 June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a transformative ten-year construction programme to deliver the world-class education and training needed to get Britain back on its feet. This includes £200 million for urgent repairs and upgrades to further education colleges this year.

■ Higher Education

Afzal Khan: [\[61578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions has he had with representatives of universities on the planned (a) delivery and (b) format of higher education courses in the 2020-21 academic year.

Afzal Khan: [\[61582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department made of the value of online learning for university students.

Michelle Donelan:

Departmental officials and I have been engaging with the sector to help to ensure that higher education providers can continue to deliver courses which are fit for purpose and which help students achieve their academic goals. The vast majority of providers are planning for a mixture of face-to-face and online teaching in the autumn term, and we have already seen some fantastic, innovative preparations for blended education for the next academic year. Delivering through a mixture of face-to-face and online provision will enable them to prioritise safety and to comply with guidance from Public Health England.

Departmental officials are also working closely with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), which has recently published guidance, attached [1], setting out 4 key principles to inform providers as they plan for the next academic year. The principles are that any move to on-site activity is safe and secure for staff and students, that degree-awarding bodies maintain quality and standards in the move to flexible provision, that providers engage with students and staff in planning changes to delivery and assessment of teaching and learning and that providers' planning scenarios are flexible and responsive to students' needs.

As providers have moved a significant proportion of their provision online for both the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year and for the next academic year, maintaining

the quality and value of online teaching and learning has been at the forefront of our actions. While the methods of delivery may have changed, we are engaging with the sector and the Office for Students (OfS) to ensure that the depth and breadth of the curriculum, the quality of the teaching and the value of the degree achieved are maintained. This will help to ensure that any online learning provides the same academic value to students as campus-based learning. The OfS and the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education have both also recently issued guidance on student and consumer protection issues during the COVID-19 outbreak. The OfS and I have been clear that providers should give students clear and transparent information on what they can expect from their course in the next academic year and the extent to which initial teaching will be online, how this will happen and what support there will be for online learning.

[1] <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/preserving-quality-and-standards-through-a-time-of-rapid-change.pdf>

Attachments:

1. 61578_61582_guidance [61578 61582 Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education guidance - 'Preserving quality and standards through a time of rapid change'.pdf]

■ **Holiday Play Schemes: Churches**

Justin Madders:

[66896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance the Government has provided to (a) local authorities and (b) church leaders on provision of summer holiday camps through churches that provide food and activities for (i) vulnerable and (ii) other local children.

Vicky Ford:

The department has published guidance for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children over the age of 5. It sets out the safety measures that must be in place to ensure they can operate over the summer holiday. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

This follows confirmation from my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, that from Saturday 4 July, these providers can operate over the summer holiday, with safety measures in place.

When state schools in a local area have closed for the summer term, children of all ages may attend out-of-school settings in that area, including vulnerable children.

On 22 June, the department also announced the 17 local authority areas that our holiday activities and food programme will operate in this summer, providing thousands of disadvantaged children with access to healthy meals and holiday activities.

■ Pre-school Education: Pupil Premium

Tulip Siddiq: [\[66943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of children who are (a) eligible for the early years pupil premium and (b) in receipt of that support through their early years provider.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[66944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many childcare providers have claimed support through the early years pupil premium in each of the last five years; and for how many children that support has been claimed for in each of those years.

Vicky Ford:

The table below shows the number of children in receipt of the early years pupil premium and the total number of providers attended by those children according to the early years census. The figures reflect the position as it was during 'census week' in January of each year.

Number of 3- and 4-year-old children recorded in receipt of early years pupil premium and the number of providers attended

YEAR	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF PROVIDERS
2020	49,256	12,814
2019	48,305	12,714
2018	42,830	11,928
2017	47,103	12,261
2016	50,591	12,458

Source: Early Years Census

The department does not hold information on the number of children who are eligible for the early years premium but are not in receipt of that support.

These figures only relate to children attending private, voluntary and independent providers, including childminders. The majority of children in receipt of pupil premium aged 4 will be in school settings in Reception so will be in receipt of the school-age pupil premium, rather than the early years pupil premium. Therefore, they have been excluded from the figures in the above table.

■ Schools: Attendance

Hilary Benn: [\[68664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the children of parents who are shielding will be required to attend school from September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Our intention is for all children to return to school from September. On 2 July we published guidance to help schools plan for a full return.

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID-19. This means that even the small number of pupils who remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school.

The current advice on shielding can be read at:

<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>.

The guidance on the full opening of schools can be viewed at:

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

Schools: Carshalton and Wallington**Elliot Colburn:****[66983]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the press release entitled, Build build build: Prime Minister announces New Deal for Britain, how much funding he plans to allocate to school building upgrade projects in Carshalton and Wallington constituency.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has announced a transformative, ten-year programme to rebuild school buildings. This will replace poor condition and ageing school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs, transforming education for thousands of pupils.

We have committed over £1 billion to fund the first 50 projects of the ten-year programme. These projects will be confirmed in the autumn, and construction on the first sites is expected to begin in autumn 2021. Further details of the new ten-year rebuilding programme, including additional funding, will be set out following the Spending Review.

We are also providing £560 million of additional condition funding for the school system this year to support essential maintenance projects. This comes on top of over £1.4 billion capital funding already provided for school maintenance in the financial year 2020-21. We will set out details of how the additional capital funding will be allocated shortly.

Schools: Coronavirus**Geraint Davies:****[64048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on reducing air pollution around schools, to help protect (a) teaching staff and (b) children attending schools during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities are responsible for the mitigation of air pollution hot spots in areas where people may be exposed, including schools. They have discretionary powers to take action to improve local air quality. For example, they can issue fixed penalty notices to drivers leaving engines running unnecessarily after being asked to turn them off. In areas with poor air quality, local authorities have a statutory duty to publish air quality plans for reducing air pollution.

Local authorities also have a statutory duty to promote sustainable school travel. The department's guidance sets out that this duty should have a broad impact, including 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. 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 promote cycling and walking:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>.

Layla Moran:**[64303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the risk from schools fully reopening of a small chain of covid-19 infection in schools leading to a wider outbreak; and if he will publish the advice he has received from SAGE on that matter.

Nick Gibb:

We want to get more children back to school because it is vital for their education and their wellbeing. As such the Government has announced that all children will return to school from September.

On 2 July we published guidance to help schools plan for a full return of all pupils in the Autumn term:

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

The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for head teachers to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. In welcoming all children back this Autumn, schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls outlined in the guidance to reduce the risk of transmission. If schools follow the guidance set out, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively.

The guidance also includes the process that should be followed if anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school. This guidance has been developed with advice from, and is endorsed by, Public Health England.

SAGE publish papers from their meetings on a regular basis on the SAGE website. The list of papers released to date is available by following the link below, including several schools-related papers. This list will be updated to reflect papers considered at future meetings:

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

■ Schools: Ethnic Groups

Apsana Begum:

[66989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Questions 61818, 61819 and 61820 on Children: Ethnic Groups and with reference to his statement in that Answer that his Department does not centrally hold that information, how his Department has assessed the effect of schools' policies on BAME people; and if he will place a copy of the methodology and conclusions of that assessment in the Library.

Apsana Begum:

[67802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Questions 61818, 61819 and 61820 on Children: Ethnic Groups and with reference to his statement in that Answer that his Department does not centrally hold that information, for what reasons the information is not held centrally; and whether his Department plans to gather and hold that information in the future.

Nick Gibb:

When making decisions about asking schools to welcome back more children, Ministers have had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, as required by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

We continue to keep our assessment of those matters under review. This has been an in depth and ongoing assessment of the impacts of the Government's policy,

including on groups with protected characteristics such as race. The assessments continue to form an active part of the decision-making process .

Importantly, we know that some staff, parents and pupils may be anxious about returning to school. Where individuals are concerned about their comparatively increased risk from coronavirus, due to factors including ethnicity, age, sex and comorbidities, we are asking school leaders to discuss concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk, in line with our guidance.

■ Schools: Standards

Sir Charles Walker:

[64103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to inform schools of the outcome of their Condition Improvement Fund bid; and if he will make statement.

Nick Gibb:

The outcome of the Condition Improvement Fund 2020-21 bidding round was announced on Monday 29 June. The list of successful applications can be found on here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/condition-improvement-fund-2020-to-2021-outcome>

■ Special Educational Needs

Tulip Siddiq:

[67717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Education, Health and Care plans have been recorded in each of the last 10 years.

Vicky Ford:

The number of education, health and care (EHC) plans is available in the statistics publication, 'Education, health and care plans', which is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

This also includes the number of statements of special educational needs (SEN), which EHC plans began to replace from September 2014. The number of statements of SEN and EHC plans in each of the last ten years are shown in a table, which is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/70ff8d4d-5c28-4c45-bc6b-fa6735ee7c3a>.

■ Teachers: Ethnic Groups

Afzal Khan:

[61781]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) heads, (b) deputy heads, and (c) senior teachers in state-funded secondary schools are Black or minority ethnic in (i) England, (ii) Greater Manchester, and (iii) Manchester Gorton.

Nick Gibb:

The attached table shows the number of Ethnic Minority headteachers, deputy headteachers, and all leadership teachers in state-funded secondary schools and all state-funded schools in England, Greater Manchester, and Manchester Gorton in November 2019 - the latest data available. Further information is published in the annual "School workforce in England" statistical release here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

Attachments:

1. Headteachers by Ethnicity [61781_Headteachers_By_Ethnicity (2).xls.xlsx]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Coronavirus: Disability****Martyn Day:****[30861]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) support and (b) essential food supplies reach people who are housebound with disabilities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Martyn Day:**[58030]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to Question 30861, tabled by the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk on 17 March 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

This is a devolved matter. We have set out below the actions that we have taken in England.

We know that a large number of disabled people continue to rely on friends, family and wider community support as they face difficulties accessing food.

Where that is not possible, there are a number of options available for people to access support. Individuals can request support from a volunteer via NHS Volunteer Responders, who can shop on their behalf.

We are working with local authorities, supermarkets and charities to ensure that vulnerable groups get the support they need to access food and other essential supplies. These organisations are able to sign-post people to commercial food delivery options, help them access priority supermarket delivery slots or refer them to the NHS Volunteer Responder programme.

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) can also register for support online or via an automated helpline. As part of the registration process, we have asked individuals to indicate whether they have unmet basic care needs, such as social care and social contact needs. Local authorities are best placed to respond to these needs, and we are sharing data with them to ensure vulnerable individuals get the support they need while shielding.

The NHS has also made arrangements to have medicines delivered to CEV people's homes by local community pharmacies or their dispensing doctor, where no other person is able to collect the item from the pharmacy and deliver it to the patient.

Where people who are CEV have asked for help accessing food, they have been offered centrally provided food boxes and supermarkets have offered priority delivery slots. Boxes will continue until the end of July and seven supermarkets have confirmed that access to priority supermarket delivery slots will continue beyond the end of July for those already signed up for support.

We have also made available an additional £63 million to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. Local authorities are already working hard to support those who are vulnerable and this additional funding will contribute to that work.

■ Food Banks

Rachael Maskell:

[66913]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to encourage more (a) food producers and (b) supermarkets to increase levels of donations to (i) food banks and (ii) other food poverty alleviation schemes.

Victoria Prentis:

Supermarkets are donating money and food to local communities, charities and food banks to respond to COVID-19. For example, Tesco is providing a £30 million package of support that includes a £25 million food donations programme.

Sainsbury's has donated £3 million to FareShare, Asda donated £5 million to food banks and community charities to help people through COVID-19 and Morrisons has promised £10 million of dedicated stock to be set aside for local food banks. Other supermarkets have also made donations.

For those who find themselves in severe financial difficulties, the Government announced up to £16 million to provide food for charities and other organisations supporting those who are struggling as a result of coronavirus. The programme is providing millions of meals over 12 weeks and is being delivered through charities including FareShare and the Waste and Resources Action Programme. This builds on the generous donations already provided by the industry, including supermarkets.

As part of this, Defra has also opened up the £3.5 million Food Charities Grant Fund for front-line food aid charities, offering grants up to £100,000 to support charities to continue to provide food to vulnerable people.

On 10 June the Prime Minister announced over £60 million in support to local authorities in England to help people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials because of COVID-19.

Rachael Maskell:

[66914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of supermarkets on increasing the number of food bank collection points.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has well-established ways of working with the food industry sectors. We are liaising with retailers regularly to discuss various issues including food banks.

We welcome the efforts of industry to support the operation of food banks and front-line charities during the coronavirus pandemic, including through generous donations of food. Retailers have also implemented a number of solutions to make it easy for customers to make donations to food banks by setting up donation points in store, in addition to making direct donations to food banks.

For those in severe financial difficulties, the Government announced up to £16 million to provide food for charities and other organisations supporting those who are struggling as a result of the coronavirus. The programme will provide millions of meals over 12 weeks. As part of this, Defra has also opened up the £3.5 million Food Charities Grant Fund for front-line food aid charities, offering grants up to £100,000, to support charities to continue to provide food to vulnerable people. On 10 June the Prime Minister announced over £60 million in support to local authorities in England to help people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials during the coronavirus pandemic.

■ **Furs: Imports**

John Nicolson:

[66893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle imports of real fur for commercial sale.

John Nicolson:

[66894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will ban imports of real fur for commercial sale.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Totnes on 30 June 2020, PQ UIN 62631.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-22/62631]

■ **Litter and Nature Conservation: Coronavirus**

Dr Luke Evans:

[66987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage the general public to respect the natural environment and avoid littering as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has released a range of digital content over social media that explains what individuals can do to protect others and the environment. This includes advice on how to enjoy outdoor spaces responsibly, such as by taking rubbish home when there are no bins available, and how to dispose of personal protective equipment appropriately. This digital content is available at:

www.linkedin.com/posts/defra_coronavirus-stayalert-activity-6672424604566376449-R-ly ;

twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1272770631780700162 ; and

twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1276046970621173760.

■ **Litter: Fixed Penalties****Paul Maynard:****[66846]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many fixed penalty notices for littering have been issued by local authorities in each of the last 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra does not hold this data. Requirements for local authorities to report data on the number of fixed penalties issued for littering and other environmental offences were ended in 2010, in order to reduce reporting burdens.

Data on the number of prosecutions and convictions, including those related to offenses under section 87 EPA 1990, are published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2019>

■ **Livestock: Exports****Sammy Wilson:****[66840]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the export of live animals.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the Rt Hon Member for Chipping Barnet on 11 June 2020, PQ UIN 55899.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-08/55899]

■ **Pest Control: Crime****Debbie Abrahams:****[67654]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the laying of illegal poison baits.

Victoria Prentis:

Biocidal products, including rodenticides and insecticides, have to be authorised under the Biocidal Products Regulation. The use of biocides must comply with specific terms and conditions, including on the placing of baits. Where the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has enforcement responsibility, it seeks to ensure that high standards of compliance with biocides are achieved and maintained. The Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS), operated by HSE on behalf of Defra, investigates the deaths, not just of wildlife, but also of livestock and some pets, where there is evidence that biocide poisoning may be involved. Where poison baits are used illegally to harm wildlife, such as raptors, responsibility for enforcement lies with the police.

■ Transport: Graffiti and Litter**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[68674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what procedures his Department has put in place to monitor compliance with (a) litter and (b) graffiti regulations in relation to public land by (i) the Department for Transport, (ii) Highways England and (iii) Network Rail.

Rebecca Pow:

The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse sets out statutory standards for the removal of litter and refuse from relevant land and highways. It also sets out advisory standards for local authorities for graffiti removal, but there are no statutory requirements to remove graffiti.

Damaging property by leaving graffiti is an offence of criminal damage. Neither Highways England nor Network Rail has enforcement powers in respect of either littering or graffiti.

In 2018, Defra commissioned an independent survey of roadside litter on those parts of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) where Highways England is responsible for maintenance but the local authority is responsible for clearing litter. The results have been shared with relevant local authorities and will be used in policy development.

The Department for Transport published the Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) in March of this year, which sets out the Government's long-term ambition for the SRN. The RIS2 includes a litter performance indicator in which Highways England will be required to report on the percentage of the SRN covered by Highways England's Asset Delivery contracts where litter is graded at B or above under the Litter Code of Practice. Highways England performance on this metric will be reported to the Office for Road and Rail and Highways England will publish the data annually. This will ensure that there is an increased level of transparency for road users.

■ Tree Planting

Jim Shannon:

[\[66866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage tree planting.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to significantly increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025, working with the Devolved Administrations to do so.

To drive up tree planting rates in England we announced a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund and have opened a consultation on an England Tree Strategy. We welcome input from the sector and wider public to that consultation, which will help to inform and shape the strategy.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Paul Maynard:

[\[59407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with which international counterparts he has held discussions on the establishment of air bridges.

Nigel Adams:

A list of countries and territories from which passengers arriving in England will no longer have to self-isolate for 14 days was published on 3 July. This follows the Government's first review of public health measures at the border, which were introduced in June 2020. The Government has always been clear that any decisions on border measures will be proportionate and science-led.

We are continuing to engage with all partners on all aspects of the global response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[\[67761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish a breakdown of the expenditure of the £75 million announced as part of the partnership between Government and airlines to repatriate stranded British travellers during the covid-19 pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has committed up to £75 million to help thousands of British travellers return home and this work is ongoing. A proportion of this commitment has been spent to date across the repatriation effort - not only directly on the transport required to get people home - including charter flights to the UK - but also the costs of ground transport and internal flights to get people to the departure airport. As with all

spend, we are committed to ensuring value of money for the taxpayer. Work continues to help British travellers get home, and we are retaining the capacity and capability to stand up further charter flights if necessary. Provision of a detailed breakdown at this point would impact ongoing and future tenders for charter flights and include currently commercially sensitive information.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[68417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish a list of countries from which the Government organised chartered flights to repatriate British travellers abroad who were stranded due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 7 July 2020]: Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. We have brought home over 38,000 people on 186 special charter flights organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, China, Peru, Tunisia, Ghana, Algeria, Ecuador/Bolivia, Cayman Islands (via Bermuda/Bahamas), Philippines, Nepal, India, South Africa, Nigeria, Eritrea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, New Zealand, Bermuda, Fiji, Cayman/Turks & Caicos, Honduras/Colombia, Jamaica, Argentina/Guyana, DRC/Cameroon, Tanzania, Sudan, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire/Guinea, Liberia/Cape Verde, Eastern Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Dominica, British Virgin Islands) and Andes (Chile-Ecuador-UK).

■ **British Overseas Territories: Aviation**

Andrew Rosindell:

[64858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to ensure that air bridges are established with (a) Gibraltar and (b) the Overseas Territories as soon as safely possible.

Nigel Adams:

A list of countries and territories from which passengers arriving in England will no longer have to self-isolate for 14 days was published on 3 July. This follows the Government's first review of public health measures at the border, which were introduced in June 2020. The Government has always been clear that any decisions on border measures will be proportionate and science-led.

We are continuing to engage with all partners on all aspects of the global response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

■ China: Prosperity Fund**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[68714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much funding has been allocated to China through the UK Prosperity Fund.

Nigel Adams:

All information on FCO ODA spending is available at GOV.UK link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fco-prosperity-fund-spend>

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Overseas Aid**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[68764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to (a) maintain the current level of parliamentary and independent scrutiny of the aid budget and (b) ensure departmental accountability to UK taxpayers after the merger of his Department and the Department for International Development.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be accountable to Parliament and to taxpayers for how it spends UK aid. The form this takes is a matter for Parliament. We remain committed to full transparency in our aid spending and there will continue to be parliamentary and independent scrutiny of the aid budget.

■ Hong Kong: National Security**Stephen Kinnock:** [\[68718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he plans to have with the Chief Executive of Hong Kong on the powers bestowed on her under the new National Security legislation to appoint judges to hear national security cases.

Nigel Adams:

As the Foreign Secretary said in Parliament on 1 July, the enactment by China of the national security law for Hong Kong is a grave and deeply disturbing step. The law's imposition on the people of Hong Kong constitutes a clear and serious breach of the Joint Declaration. We are particularly concerned by the provision for Hong Kong's Chief Executive, rather than the Chief Justice, to appoint judges to hear national security cases.

On 1 July, the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office summoned the Chinese Ambassador to make clear the UK's deep concern at China's actions. Our Consul General in Hong Kong has also raised our concerns about the legislation with members of the Executive Council Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary spoke to Chinese State Councillor and Minister for Foreign affairs, Wang Yi on 8 June. We will continue to raise our concerns with both the Governments of China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Sara Britcliffe:

[\[67001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to help secure peace between Israel and Palestine.

James Cleverly:

The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. We continue to work closely with international partners strongly advocating a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations. The Foreign Secretary did so most recently in a meeting with French and German Foreign Ministers on 19 June. The Foreign Secretary also discussed the Middle East Peace Process and our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during calls with Alternate Israeli Prime Minister Gantz on 20 May and Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 2 June.

■ Israeli Settlements

Owen Thompson:

[\[66936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to respond to the Israeli annexation of the West Bank since his statement on 31 January 2020.

James Cleverly:

As the Prime Minister made clear in the House of Commons on 16 June, we are concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. I reiterated this as our position in a statement to the UN Security Council on 24 June. Any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law. The United Kingdom will not recognise any unilateral attempt to change the border. Such a step would go against the rules-based international order and the UN Charter. We urge Israel to reconsider. The Prime Minister did so in an article in Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth on 1 July.

■ Operation Blue Star

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of Government documents relating to the 1984 Amritsar massacre has been put into the public domain.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of the documents published in relation to the 1984 Amritsar massacre contain redacted information.

Nigel Adams:

The information is not readily available, nor held centrally, and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has for an inquiry to establish the extent of the UK Government's involvement in the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple, Amritsar.

Nigel Adams:

We fully appreciate the importance many people attach to information concerning the events at the Golden Temple in 1984. The Heywood review of 2014 worked specifically to establish facts about the UK advice and assistance to the Indian Government. It concluded that UK assistance was advisory, ended several months before the operation, and had limited impact on the tragic events that followed. The Government has concluded that there is no basis to challenge the conclusions of the 2014 review.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Drugs

Fiona Bruce:

[\[64885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that women who take abortion pills at home understand the risks of doing so.

Helen Whately:

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has issued clinical guidelines for healthcare professionals on 'Coronavirus infection and abortion care'. The guidance states that written information should be provided or available to women prior to the consultation. Prior to treatment commencing, women will be clearly informed that medical abortion is a two-stage process which requires the administration of Mifepristone followed by Misoprostol to successfully complete the procedure.

Abortion providers will also discuss possible complications with the woman in the consultation, and women will be provided with information about possible symptoms, including those which would necessitate urgent review.

■ Abscesses: Health Services

Emma Hardy:

[\[52385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to consider the effect on (a) people's quality of life and (b) NHS resources of the cancellation and postponement of routine appointments to people with venous leg ulcers and other chronic wounds, in both the community and acute care settings; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 4 June 2020]: During the COVID-19 pandemic, patients have been receiving appropriate support to manage their conditions independently. Clinicians report success in teaching patients and carers how to monitor and dress their wounds and apply compression therapies, including bandaging. The National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) rapidly developed and published self-care advice to support these initiatives at the end of March. Some outpatient departments quickly implemented vascular hot clinics/emergency assessment clinics which offered daily access for the most critical of patients.

More consultations have been undertaken remotely and there has been an increase in flexible working allowing clinicians to visit patients at home or other community settings to enable access to appropriate therapeutic interventions.

In some areas, vascular nurse specialists from acute services who are independent non-medical prescribers have been provided with community prescription pads or been given access to other established supply systems (e.g. dressing schemes) which has enabled patients to get appropriate wound care products more quickly.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[59671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with care providers on increased costs due to covid-19 being passed on to people in care homes; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We recognise that COVID-19 is imposing significant pressures on the social care sector. We have now made £3.7 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care. On 15 May we published details of an additional £600 million Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care. This funding is to support adult social care providers in England reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience. This funding is intended to cover both the publicly funded and self-funded care markets.

■ Care Homes: Disease Control

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[65971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) provide long-term support for care homes and (b) ensure that they are equipped effectively to prevent the spread of viruses.

Helen Whately:

Since the start of this pandemic we have been working closely with the sector and public health experts to put in place guidance and support for adult social care. On 15 April we published our detailed Adult Social Care Plan.

On 15 May, we published our care home support package. This responded to the latest evidence from Public Health England and recommended further measures care homes could take to minimise the risks of the virus including by limiting movement of staff. It was backed by a new £600 million Infection Control Fund for care homes to tackle the spread of COVID-19.

We have also made £3.7 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care.

■ Carers: Coronavirus

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[65897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the additional stress placed on carers, during the covid-19 lockdown as a result of the (a) continued closure of Day Care Centres and other organisations which normally provide respite time to carers; (b) withdrawal of other measures of support for carers, unless a care package is in place and (c) unavailability of people to substitute for carers, by day or night, when those carers would usually be at work; what the impact will be on carers and those for whom they care of the continued absence of sources of respite and support; what assessment he has made of the effect on NHS resources in the event that carers suffer mental breakdown as a result of an inability to cope; and if he will take steps to facilitate the (i) reopening of Day Care Centres, with suitable safeguards in place and (ii) provision of other measures of support to carers.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 2 July 2020]: We recognise the crucial role unpaid carers play, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak and the important role that day services play in providing care and providing an essential form of respite or short breaks for unpaid carers which can allow them to continue to work and support their health and mental wellbeing.

We want access to these important services to continue as soon as it is possible for them to safely reopen.

Decisions on the running and re-opening of day services are made on a local basis and will be subject to appropriate risk assessments based on the latest public health advice. We are working with the Social Care Institute of Excellence, local government

and other sector partners, to publish guidance which will help get day services up and running again. In addition, Public Health England is developing guidance on the use of personal protective equipment in community settings, which will be applicable to day services.

■ **Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

Helen Hayes:

[\[64266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many companies have been sub-contracted by Serco to undertake covid-19 contact tracing work; and what proportion of the total contract that represents.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 June 2020]: In its role as a prime contractor for the provision of Tier 3 Tracing Agents and in accordance with the agreed delivery model, Serco has subcontracted the provision of approximately 9,000 staff, of the overall Serco allocation of 10,500 staff, to a panel of 29 subcontractors.

Helen Hayes:

[\[64974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons contracts #12 and #13 pertaining to the NHS X contact tracing app have not yet been published; and when he plans to publish those contracts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 30 June 2020]: The Department only publishes contracts that exceed £10,000 in value. Contract #12 has no financial value and therefore will not be published. Contract #13 is for Programme Management Support for the development of the National Health Service COVID-19 app provided by Accenture. Details will be published this week.

■ **Contact Tracing: Fraud**

James Cartlidge:

[\[64990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the test and trace service is not subject to (a) fraud and (b) deliberate false reporting.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government launched its new NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020 to control the rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

NHS Test and Trace has been developed to Government security standards and we have been advised on measures to keep the public safe. Data on positive laboratory tests is fed into the contact tracing system, which automatically contacts people with COVID-19 by text or email and invites them to log into the system with a set of unique characters alongside a secure link to the site. For those people that are unable to respond via email or text, perhaps because they do not have those options available

to them, a phone-based service will contact them and support them through the process.

The Test and Trace service will not ask for bank details or payments, nor will anyone be asked for details of their social media or any pin numbers or be asked to call a premium rate number. If the public are concerned about whether a call or email they receive comes from NHS Test and Trace service they can visit GOV.UK and view a page which lists the official phone numbers used by this service. Anyone who thinks they have been sent a scam message, is encouraged to report it to Action Fraud.

We will be constantly developing and improving the system and ensuring appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent misuse. We have confidence in the public to act responsibly and participate fully and openly in NHS Test and Trace, to protect others and save lives.

■ Contact Tracing: Singapore

Sir Edward Davey:

[64830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with his Singaporean counterpart on that country's track and trace covid-19 app; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Our response to this virus has and will continue to be as part of an international effort. We have been in frequent contact with a number of countries, including Singapore, to share what we are learning and that will continue.

■ Coronavirus: Air Pollution

Geraint Davies:

[64053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions has he had with Public Health England on the cost to social care of air pollution during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Department has had no discussion with Public Health England (PHE) on the cost to social care due to air pollution during the COVID-19 outbreak.

PHE has previously considered the costs to the National Health Service and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution in their 2018 published report 'Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution: summary report which is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708855/Estimation_of_costs_to_the_NHS_and_social_care_due_to_the_health_impacts_of_air_pollution_-_summary_report.pdf

■ Coronavirus: Dental Services

Dame Diana Johnson:

[31455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Chief Dental Officer for England has to issue advice to (a) dentists and (b) other dental care staff on responding to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 March 2020]: Advice has been ongoing throughout the crisis, with safe working documents being produced from 20 th March. NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) announced on 28 th May that NHS Dental services could gradually resume from 8 June. Urgent dental centres remain open to assist with the resumption of routine dentistry.

NHSE/I published a series of guidance throughout the pandemic to support dental practices. The latest guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/dental-practice/>

The guidance includes:

- NHSE/I letter issued to all dental practices, regional dental leads of the resumption of dental services.
- A detailed standard operating procedure was issued setting out guidance on how to restart dentistry safely
- Public Health England published guidance to dental practices and other health care professionals on infection control protocols (IPC) and personal protective equipment (PPE)

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Dr Dan Poulter:

[63305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level risk to people shielding from covid-19 who are now able to return to work.

Jo Churchill:

Clinically extremely vulnerable people who are shielding are still at risk of severe illness if they catch COVID-19 and should continue to take precautions. But as the latest epidemiological data shows that the risk of catching COVID-19 is now sufficiently low, the Government believes that the time is now right to further relax the shielding advice.

Employers should support employees identified either as clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable to work from home in the first instance. Where this is not possible, they should be offered the safest on-site roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others, once the advice to shield is lifted from 1 August 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Health Services**Anthony Browne:**[\[65205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to establish a study into the treatment and care of patients experiencing prolonged symptoms of covid-19 infection.

Helen Whately:

The Department invests over £1 billion a year in health and care research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR Recovery and Learning Call is currently open to researchers to submit proposals on the treatment and care of patients experiencing prolonged symptoms of COVID-19 infection.

The NIHR Recovery and Learning Call will fund research to better understand and manage the health and social care consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic beyond the acute phase. The research will focus specifically on health outcomes, public health, social care and health service delivery and to mitigate the impact of subsequent phases and aftermath.

This follows on from the UK Research and Innovation-NIHR Rapid Response Rolling Call for COVID-19 research that closed on 30 June which funded projects that could make a significant contribution to the understanding, prevention and/or management of the COVID-19 outbreak within 12 months.

■ Coronavirus: Kingston Upon Hull**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[57105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 mobile testing units are in operation in Hull.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Hull is served by its own regional testing site and this facility has been supplemented by mobile testing units (MTUs) in Hull seven times.

As of 10 June, there were 89 operational testing units. Mobile testing enables temporary testing sites to be set up quickly to serve communities on a rolling basis. An MTU provides a clinically assured, stand-alone testing service and is intended for people who cannot easily access regional test sites.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[57107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many positive covid-19 test results have been recorded from tests completed by mobile testing units based in Hull.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We do not publish data on individual mobile testing units (MTUs). We are working to improve the user experience and capacity of all MTUs across the country to meet public need.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[57109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how and by whom are covid-19 mobile testing units being managed and co-ordinated in Hull.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are working with local partners and the Army to ensure successful delivery of our mobile testing unit services to members of the public.

■ **Coronavirus: Medical Equipment**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[49690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of an international lack of availability of high throughput testing machines on access to those machines by the NHS; how many lower throughput open platform machines are in use by Public Health England; and what the effect of that lack of availability is on Public Health England's testing capacity.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England is currently reviewing high-throughput testing capability in close collaboration with our pathology testing laboratories to support access to high throughput testing platforms across each of our 29 pathology laboratory networks.

There are various testing platforms in use throughout the National Health Service and Public Health England (PHE) testing laboratories, including high throughput and lower throughput platforms. This review will enable the NHS to sustainably increase Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing capacity across England.

Nine PHE labs provide diagnostic testing capacity to support pillar 1 of the Government's testing strategy. The size and nature of the laboratories vary, and they do not all use the same machines. PHE labs have a number of 'open' molecular extraction, liquid handling and molecular amplification platforms as well as a number of high throughput end-to-end platforms which are being used to undertake a significant proportion of COVID-19 testing.

There is a sufficient number of platforms to meet the demands on PHE for testing under pillar 1 of the Government's testing strategy. PHE and NHS laboratories, together with a PHE partnership with Roche, achieved the target for pillar 1 of 25,000 tests a day by the end of April.

■ **Coronavirus: Patients**

Stella Creasy:

[\[64179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 51929 on Coronavirus: Patients, what the process is for the management of the shielding list; whether the list is managed at (a) Government and (b) local authority level; and what criteria is used to remove people from that list.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 June 2020]: The shielded patient list for England is a national database managed by NHS Digital. No deductions from the list have been made nationally.

The decision to remove an individual patient from the list is normally made by that patient's general practitioner or hospital doctor based on their clinical judgement and the criteria 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

Government advice is clear that the patient's general practitioner or hospital doctor should discuss with the patient the decision to remove them from the list before they are removed.

■ Coronavirus: Public Health**Alex Sobel:****[59591]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the advice provided on shielding is the same on both the Gov.uk and the NHS information websites.

Jo Churchill:

We are working across organisations to ensure a harmonised approach so that all forms of guidance and advice on shielding, both online and sent by letter to patients are consistent and up to date.

Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should continue to follow the updated guidance 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

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Rosie Duffield:****[38018]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been tested for covid-19 upon admission to hospital, on each day since 1 January 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 27 April 2020]: The Department recognises the importance of transparency and publishing information on COVID-19 testing but must balance this with the accuracy of the data.

Data on the number of people tested across the whole of the United Kingdom requires a range of complex data sets from multiple organisations, including those

held by the devolved administrations, to be reconciled to identify unique individuals. The process is complex, and we are not yet content that the data we have available is robust enough to provide an accurate picture.

The Department is working with the data owners to resolve the issues that currently prevent it from publishing the number of people tested. We are working to resolve this issue as quickly as possible and have committed to publishing this information going forward.

In terms of testing people upon admission to hospital, an operating framework has been published on the NHS England website which advises on management of urgent and planned services within hospital. In the case of day interventions, testing and isolation is determined locally, based on patient and procedural risk. The framework is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/05/Operating-framework-for-urgent-and-planned-services-within-hospitals.pdf>

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell: [51670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for the reintroduction of routine dental care.

Andrew Rosindell: [51671]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the dental industry on the steps required to reintroduce safe routine dental operations after the covid-19 lockdown is lifted.

Jo Churchill:

To meet the Government social distancing measures and to contain the spread of COVID-19 all routine dentistry was suspended at the start of the pandemic.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that National Health Service dentistry outside urgent care centres will begin to gradually restart from 8 June where practices assess that they have the necessary personal protective equipment and infection prevention and control. The aim is to increase levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety.

A copy of the letter that was published can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Urgent-dental-care-letter-28-May.pdf>

We still expect all NHS dental practices to provide urgent telephone advice and triage. Dentists are giving urgent advice remotely and, if needed, prescriptions for painkillers or antibiotics. All urgent face to face treatment that is clinically necessary will still be available for patients who are triaged by their dentist or NHS 111 into one

of over 600 urgent dental care centres set up by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

To ensure the safety of all dental care professionals and patients NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Chief Dental Officer have published the latest standard operating procedure guidance.

This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/dental-standard-operating-procedure-transition-to-recovery/>

The Chief Dental Officer held four workshops with a range of representatives from across the dental sector over the last month. Discussions focussed on issues around the safe delivery of dentistry and principles of resumption of wider services. These discussions included the British Dental Association (BDA) and NHS England and NHS Improvement officials also had a number of separate meetings with the BDA.

Anthony Mangnall:

[52502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will allow the reopening of dental practices in line with the reopening of non essential shops as restrictions are eased due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

To meet the Government social distancing measures and to contain the spread of COVID-19 all routine dentistry was suspended at the start of the pandemic.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced on 28 May that NHS dentistry outside urgent care centres will begin to gradually restart from 8 June where practices assess that they have the necessary personal protective equipment and infection prevention and control. The aim is to increase levels of service as fast as is compatible with maximising safety.

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To support dentists and teams to reopen safely NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Chief Dental Officer have published a standard operating procedure covering the recovery transition.

This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/dental-standard-operating-procedure-transition-to-recovery/>

Anthony Mangnall:

[55042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will allow the reopening of dental practices in line with the reopening of non-essential shops as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

To meet the Government social distancing measures and to contain the spread of COVID-19 all routine dentistry was suspended at the start of the pandemic.

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■ Dental Services: Protective Clothing

Neil Coyle:

[47309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the adequacy of the supply of personal protective equipment to dental practices to enable those practices to reopen.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 May 2020]: We are working tirelessly to make sure frontline healthcare staff have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need and have set up special distribution routes for all urgent dental care centres.

Emergency dental services have already been receiving PPE during the pandemic and now PPE for dentists is being made available through their business as usual wholesalers.

We have set up new distribution routes for dentistry to ensure continuity of supply for all urgent dental care centres and have placed them on the list of priority areas to receive supplies from Local Resilience Forums.

Stephen Morgan:

[60851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of whether the length of the notice given to dentists in respect of reopening on 8 June 2020 was sufficient to enable them to procure personal protective equipment in order to prevent the spread of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement as the commissioner of National Health Service dental services decided the notice period for the gradual resumption of face to face care by dental practices holding an NHS contract. The letter announcing this set out that the resumption should be gradual with practices increasing services only at a pace compatible with maximising safety.

Dentists continue to receive full NHS funding with, during the restart period, no targets for numbers of treatments delivered or patients seen. This is to ensure there is no pressure to restart in a way that could conflict with safety. At the height of the pandemic NHS England and NHS Improvement set up urgent dental care centres (UDCs) to provide clinically necessary urgent treatment to patients. Over 600 UDCs remain open during the restart period to ensure patients can access urgent care and no additional pressure is put on the pace of the practice restart.

Most high street dentists purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) via dental wholesalers which supply a range of equipment needed by dentists including PPE. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Government is working closely with industry, the National Health Service, social care providers and the army to ensure that PPE is delivered to those who need it. Our priority is ensuring the safety of patients and all health care workers, including dentists. This includes supporting dental wholesalers to stock the equipment needed by general dental practice to safely support practices to restart face to face dental care.

■ Diabetes and Obesity: Coronavirus

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[65093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Public Health England's report, Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, published in June 2020, what plans his Department has to conduct further research into the effect of covid-19 on people with (a) diabetes and (b) obesity; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[65094]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Public Health England's report, Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19, published in June 2020, what plans his Department has to conduct further research into the effect of the

covid-19 outbreak on BAME populations with (a) diabetes and (b) obesity; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR's Recovery and Learning Call will fund research to better understand and manage the health and social care consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic beyond the acute phase. The research will focus specifically on health outcomes, public health, social care and health service delivery and to mitigate the impact of subsequent phases and aftermath. Research on the effect of COVID-19 on people with obesity and diabetes and with black, Asian and minority ethnic populations is in scope.

This follows on from the UK Research and Innovation-NIHR Rapid Response Rolling Call for COVID-19 research that could make a significant contribution to the understanding, prevention and/or management of the COVID-19 outbreak. A highlight notice on ethnicity formed part of this initial call.

■ **Doctors: Training**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[63369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to extend or amend the training of doctors as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Helen Whately:

Health Education England (HEE) is leading the Future Doctor Programme to support the ambitions of the NHS People Plan and establish a clear view of what the National Health Service, patients and the public require from future doctors. The Programme will identify requirements for reform of medical education and training and will incorporate lessons from the response to COVID-19.

Through the ongoing Annual Review of Competency Progression, HEE is reviewing junior doctor training progress and the impact of COVID-19, to ensure programmes can be amended or extended and any gaps in training addressed where necessary. HEE has also worked with the General Medical Council and Royal Medical Colleges to minimise the need for training extensions due to the impact of cancelled exams.

■ **Epilepsy: Drugs**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[63371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the continued supply of epilepsy medication in the event that the UK exits the transition period without a trade agreement with the EU.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January and is now in a Transition Period until 31 December 2020. During this time, it remains our objective to negotiate a future relationship with the EU and in our respective published negotiating documents, we have both stated objectives to reach an agreement on

trade in goods. The UK's published approach sets out how we want to facilitate trade in medicinal products and support high levels of patient safety.

The Department has well-established procedures to deal with medicine shortages, whatever their cause, and will always work closely with the pharmaceutical industry and National Health Service to help ensure patients continue to have access to the medicines and treatments they need, including epilepsy medication, under all scenarios.

■ Health Professions: Sick Leave

Layla Moran:

[64311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many days (a) nurses, (b) doctors and (c) other health service staff have taken off work for mental health reasons in each year since 2015.

Helen Whately:

The following table shows National Health Service sickness absence statistics in annual full time equivalent (FTE) days lost due to mental health related reasons, by staff groups, in the NHS in England, March to February each year, 2015 to 2020.

The sickness absence rate has been provided to account for the increases in the number of doctors, nurses and other staff.

Mental health related absence includes anxiety/stress/depression, other psychiatric illnesses, psychological, stress and other mental disorders.

	MARCH 2015 - FEBRUARY 2016	MARCH 2016 - FEBRUARY 2017	MARCH 2017 - FEBRUARY 2018	MARCH 2018 - FEBRUARY 2019	MARCH 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020
DOCTORS					
FTE days lost due to mental health related reasons	89,218	91,188	102,190	120,074	136,771
Sickness absence rate for mental health related absence as a percentage of FTE days available	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%

OTHER STAFF	MARCH 2015 - FEBRUARY 2016	MARCH 2016 - FEBRUARY 2017	MARCH 2017 - FEBRUARY 2018	MARCH 2018 - FEBRUARY 2019	MARCH 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020
FTE days lost due to mental health related reasons	2,188,226	2,347,086	2,571,263	2,902,457	3,382,200
Sickness absence rate for mental health related absence as a percentage of FTE days available	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%

■ Health Visitors: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[\[63448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to prepare for a potential increase in vulnerable children and parents needing additional support from the health visiting service as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Catherine West:

[\[63449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the backlog of Healthy Child Programme appointments; and what steps he is taking to reduce that backlog.

Jo Churchill:

Health visitors have continued to partially deliver the healthy child programme offer throughout the pandemic, providing continued support to families with known vulnerabilities and facilitate the identification of families with new or previously unidentified vulnerabilities during lockdown. Contacts with families have been virtual unless there was a compelling clinical or safeguarding need, ensuring children remain safe and protected.

National data is not yet available to provide insight into the reach of health visiting services during lockdown.

NHS England and NHS Improvement published the restoration framework for community health services for children and young people on 3 June 2020. The framework recommends that community health services move to restore health visiting services, following their prioritisation during the containment phase of the pandemic. The guidance recommends continuation of essential services, including

antenatal, new birth and six to eight-week contacts, and the need for face to face support for vulnerable families.

The Restoration framework for community health services – children and young people can be viewed at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-prioritisation-within-community-health-services-with-annex_19-march-2020/

■ Hospitals: Crimes of Violence

Layla Moran:

[64307]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many assaults on hospital staff there were in each year since 2017.

Helen Whately:

Data is not collected centrally on assaults against National Health Service staff in England. In the 2019 NHS Staff Survey, 14.9% of respondents experienced physical violence from patients, service users, their relatives or members of the public in the past year.

Any assault, physical or verbal, against NHS staff is unacceptable and should be reported and dealt with through the proper processes. The NHS has recently joined forces with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service in a Joint Agreement on Offences Against Emergency Workers. This provides a framework to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of cases where staff are the victim of a crime and sets out the standards victims of these crimes can expect.

■ Hospitals: Dementia

Stephen Timms:

[62251]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to permit family visits to patients with dementia in hospital during the covid-19 lockdown.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 25 June 2020]: On 5 June 2020, NHS England revised its guidance on how National Health Service organisations may choose to facilitate visiting across healthcare inpatient settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The national suspension on visiting was lifted with immediate effect. Visiting is now subject to local discretion by trusts and other NHS bodies. The revised guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0524-visiting-healthcare-inpatient-settings-5-June-2020.pdf>

■ Mental Health Services: Schools

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[66845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequate capacity of mental health services in schools for the start of the next academic year.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are implementing the core proposals in our response to the consultation 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' Green Paper including, where possible, adapting the support made available during the COVID-19 outbreak to the circumstances that schools and colleges and children and young people will face once the new academic year starts.

Where in place, new services such as mental health support teams, working alongside established services across health, education, children's services and voluntary sector, will provide important support to children and young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues.

■ Mental Illness: Coronavirus

Tracey Crouch:

[\[64136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the additional funding required to support people with (a) long-term mental health conditions, (b) addictions and (c) adult safeguarding requirements as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to transform mental health care, funding is expected to grow faster than total National Health Service spending every year, with investment at least £2.3 billion higher each year by 2023/24.

For people with long-term mental health conditions, we have provided an additional £5 million of funding for mental health charities to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing. In addition, the Government has announced a further £4.2 million to mental health charities as part of the Government's United Kingdom-wide £750 million package of support for the voluntary sector.

The Government has also made a total of £3.2 billion available to local authorities to help them respond to COVID-19 pressures across all the services they deliver, including for addiction support, adult social care and safeguarding.

■ Methadone: Prescriptions

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[61461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the use of electronic prescription for FP10 MDA prescriptions.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[61462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to enable the use of electronic FP 10 MDA prescriptions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 June 2020]: In 2018 NHS Digital undertook a prioritisation exercise to identify future enhancements and improvements to the electronic prescription service (EPS) through to March 2021. This included a review of the use of FP10 MDA prescriptions. This exercise identified several other higher priority developments to EPS that were required at that time.

More recently work to review gaps in the EPS as part of the NHS COVID-19 response has resulted in some work being initiated to accelerate technical developments that will be required to support both this and other immediate concerns. This work has commenced but does not currently include EPS support for FP10 MDA prescription use due to the technical changes required. This is a highly complex area and requires significant development both centrally and by system vendors.

■ **Musculoskeletal Disorders: Coronavirus**

Alex Norris:

[\[67747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to promote musculoskeletal health during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: Improving musculoskeletal health is a key priority for this Government and we made specific commitments to tackle musculoskeletal (MSK) ill-health last year in 'Advancing our health: Prevention in the 2020s'. Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with professional bodies and third sector stakeholders to promote MSK health. They are providing evidence-based interventions and resources to support people with MSK conditions and preventative strategies to those at risk of developing MSK conditions during the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ **NHS: Cycling and Walking**

Selaine Saxby:

[\[52627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Transport and (b) health sector bodies on promoting cycling and walking for NHS (i) employees and (ii) patients.

Jo Churchill:

The Secretary of State has frequent conversations with relevant Cabinet colleagues and stakeholders. The Department of Transport recently announced a £2billion investment to boost a greener active transport. This includes a £250million emergency active travel fund to help encourage more people to choose cycling and walking as alternatives to public transport when they need to travel. Evidence

suggests that regular physical activity can promote good physical health and help manage stress and anxiety.

■ **NHS: Secondment**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[64184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has published on how medical research charities and trusts can reclaim staff costs for employees seconded to the NHS during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 29 June 2020]: Officials, working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, with input from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Association of Medical Research Charities, are drafting guidance on the process by which non-National Health Service organisations that have loaned/redeployed research staff that they employ to the NHS will be able to recover relevant costs. This will apply to research staff funded by research funders including the National Institute for Health Research, UKRI, and charities and will be published shortly.

■ **Nurses: Coronavirus**

Karin Smyth:

[\[64954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure hospitals and NHS trusts have the continued stability of supply routes and skills of trainee nurses required in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Health Education England (HEE) is working with stakeholders and partners across the system to ensure that we continue to attract prospective students onto pre-registration programmes, reduce attrition from those programmes and support newly qualified nurses into roles within trusts. HEE is working with universities to understand the impact of COVID-19 on students being able to complete their programmes, understanding what they need to do to complete their degree and putting steps in place that will enable them to graduate and take up roles within the National Health Service.

From September 2020, eligible new and continuing nursing, midwifery and most allied health profession students studying pre-registration courses at English universities will benefit from a new, non-repayable, training grant of at least £5,000 per academic year in addition to the funding available already through the Learning Support Fund and Student Loans Company.

This Government continues to support and fund the apprenticeship programme, which includes Nurse Degree Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are an excellent way to enter rewarding and valuable careers within the NHS and social care, and they will continue to play a vital role in delivering the high-quality skills employers need and that will support our economic recovery post-COVID-19.

Karin Smyth:

[\[64955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effect on colleges of reduced student nurse intake levels as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Health Education England (HEE) is working with stakeholders and partners across the system to ensure that we continue to attract prospective students onto pre-registration programmes, reduce attrition from those programmes and support newly qualified nurses into roles within trusts. HEE is working with universities to understand the impact of COVID-19 on students being able to complete their programmes, understanding what they need to do to complete their degree and putting steps in place that will enable them to graduate and take up roles within the National Health Service.

The health and education sectors are working jointly to increase applications and places; the Government announced 5,000 more healthcare places from September. From September 2020, eligible new and continuing nursing, midwifery and most allied health profession students studying pre-registration courses at English universities will benefit from a new, non-repayable, training grant of at least £5,000 per academic year in addition to the funding available already through the Learning Support Fund and Student Loans Company.

■ Nurses: Pay

Geraint Davies:

[\[59664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure student nurses who were contracted to work during the covid-19 outbreak are compensated for the hours they have been contracted to work.

Helen Whately:

The Government is extremely grateful to all student nurses who have supported the COVID-19 response, by opting into a paid placement for their time in practice at the frontline during the pandemic.

We have ensured that all students who do so are rewarded fairly for their hard work. NHS England has been funding the support to trusts where the contracts are held and Health Education England (HEE) has been brokering appropriate placements between the university and trust.

It was always made clear to these students that the arrangements would need to come to an end at an appropriate point and Health Education England, NHS England and NHS Improvement have agreed appropriate transition arrangements for all students in paid placements.

Any student in the last six months of their programme on a paid placement will be paid until the end of their contract, unless otherwise agreed. By the end of July most

final year students can qualify as registered nurses and start full time work, increasing their pay.

For students in year two or the first part of their final year, employers and universities will work with them to aim to bring paid placements to a close no later than 31 August. This will be part of a voluntary learning agreement between student, placement provider and university.

■ Nurses: Students

Dame Diana Johnson:

[60722]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for student nurses whose final year unpaid placements are due to end in relation to (a) early qualification and (b) extended placements as a result of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 June 2020]: All student nurses are required to complete practice placements as part of their education programme. The Government is extremely grateful to all student nurses who have supported the COVID-19 response, by opting into a paid placement for their time in practice at the frontline during the pandemic.

There are also a number of students who have not been in paid placements during the pandemic and after 31 July, provision has been made for the return of supernumerary placements.

Health Education England is working locally with each higher education provider to ensure placements are available and is supporting students so that as many as possible graduate on time. For those final year students who may need to extend beyond three years, arrangements are being developed to ensure that they get the support that they need in order to graduate. Details of these arrangements will be communicated to students as soon as possible.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has been clear that where a student has completed all their hours, academic assessment and university sign off they can go on to the NMC register and start their working life as a qualified nurse.

Justin Madders:

[66897]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of 18 December 2019 that all nursing students on courses from September 2020 will receive a payment of at least £5,000 a year which they will not need to pay back, when (a) further details on that funding will be published and (b) the application process will open.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: The Department published the 'NHS financial support for health students (4 th edition) NHS Learning Support Fund' on 29 June. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/learning-support-fund-4th-edition>

The NHS Business Services Authority is administering the new maintenance grant on behalf of the Department. Students have been able to register online for an account and apply since 1 July 2020. More information is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund>

■ Obesity: Surgery

Dr James Davies: [58743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase surgical interventions for people with obesity in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Dr James Davies: [58744]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Public Health England report entitled Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to obesity services; and whether his Department plans to improve access to bariatric surgery for people with obesity.

Jo Churchill:

Clinical Commissioning Groups are responsible for commissioning complex obesity services for adults, which include all bariatric surgical procedures and the associated care. To help practitioners deliver the best possible care and give people the most effective treatments, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has produced a suite of guidance on reducing obesity including "Obesity: identification, assessment and management". This includes recommendations on when to consider bariatric surgery for people who are obese.

Covid-19 makes it more important than ever to support the nation in achieving a healthy weight. We outlined in the "COVID-19 Recovery Strategy", that we will invest in preventative and personalised solutions to ill-health, empowering individuals to live healthier and more active lives. This will involve expanding the infrastructure for active travel, for example cycling and walking, and expanding health screening services, especially through the NHS Health Check programme, which is currently under review.

Through the third chapter of the childhood obesity plan, published in July 2019 as part of "Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s", we are committed to looking at what further action can be taken to improve our weight management services and we are actively looking at how we can better support people living with obesity to achieve a healthier weight.

■ Out-patients: Coronavirus

Mr Andrew Mitchell: [44988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to introduce covid-19 testing for patients prior to hospital outpatient appointments.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

An operating framework has been published on NHS England's website which advises on management of urgent and planned services within hospital. In the case of day interventions, testing and isolation is determined locally, based on patient and procedural risk. The framework is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/05/Operating-framework-for-urgent-and-planned-services-within-hospitals.pdf>

■ Pain: Health Services**Alex Norris:****[67749]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to the online version of the Escape-pain programme.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: In the NHS Long Term plan, published on 7 January 2019, NHS England set out the expansion of online access to support for people with musculoskeletal problems. This included programmes such as a digital version of the well-established face-to-face ESCAPE-pain group programme, which enables self-management and coping with arthritic pain through exercise.

The online version of the ESCAPE-pain programme is currently freely available in both a web-based form, which can be accessed by a computer or a variety of mobile devices, and an application available on Android smartphones. The ESCAPE-pain website is at the following link:

www.escape-pain.org/

Outcome data on user engagement the ESCAPE-Pain programme is expected in August.

■ Pathology: Digital Technology**Charlotte Nichols:****[65026]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the level of digital pathology in the NHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHSX and NHS Digital have an existing workstream for digital pathology. This work was delayed in order to divert resources to support the COVID-19 pandemic, including working with pathology systems in the collection of virus and antibody test results. As we move back to focus on core activities, digital pathology work will resume. NHSX will be working with the pathology community to develop a digital pathology strategy which will cover updates to coding and messaging standards as well as the ability to view results across the National Health Service.

■ Patients: Coronavirus**Mark Tami:****[64854]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) people who have been advised by their healthcare teams to shield beyond 1 August 2020 and (b) other people on the Shielded Patients List are able to access healthcare up to and after that date.

Jo Churchill:

From 1 August the Government will be advising that shielding will be paused, unless local measures are in place. From this date, the Government is advising the clinically extremely vulnerable to adopt strict social distancing rather than full shielding measures. Strict social distancing means you may wish to go out to more places and see more people but you should take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household or support bubble.

The core support offer, which will continue to be available to the end of July, covers the following three areas of assistance:

- Essential supplies – a free, standardised weekly parcel of food and household essentials;
- Medicines – arrangements to have medicines delivered to people's homes by local community pharmacies or their dispensing doctor; and
- Social contact and basic needs – for example, emotional or social support such as people to talk to on the phone or via a computer.

After 1 August, NHS Volunteers will continue to help with transport to a medical appointment, medicines deliveries and provide peer support and companionship to people who are shielding as they transition to the new guidance.

The Government will continue to engage extensively with partners and the healthcare system throughout this process to help ensure they are meeting the needs of those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus**Paul Bristow:****[59629]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to (a) ensure the safety of and (b) support pharmacists during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Community pharmacies are private businesses and employers in the sector have a legal responsibility to protect workers from risk to their health and safety. Guidance on working safely is available to community pharmacies. This includes guidance published on GOV.UK for people who work in or run shops, stores or similar environments, including community pharmacies, and a COVID-19 standard operating procedure for community pharmacy, which has been published by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

As part of minimising the risk to pharmacy staff, deliveries of personal protective equipment have been made to around 11,500 pharmacies in England. Further supplies have been distributed to wholesalers and distributor networks supplying community pharmacies and, where there remains an urgent need, provisions are in place for pharmacies to source supplies via Local Resilience Forums or the National Supply Distribution Response.

Funding of £300 has been provided to community pharmacies for the purchase and installation of physical barriers such as screens and retractable tape barriers, or other adjustments, to help enforce social distancing between their staff and patients.

We continue to work with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee to assess what further support community pharmacy may require to continue to supply medicines and to help their communities stay well and to ensure their continued safety at this time.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[61717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support was provided to pharmacies in response to the closure of GP surgeries during the initial phase of the covid-19 lockdown.

Jo Churchill:

The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 outline provisions for emergency supply by a pharmacist, including one when a pandemic is declared or imminently anticipated. This specific provision has been utilised at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow NHS England and NHS Improvement to commission a local enhanced service - where one is needed, for example when a general practitioner surgery closes – to enable pharmacists to supply medicines, which patients have been previously prescribed, without a prescription, and at the same time reducing administrative burden on pharmacies.

Funds were also made available to support pharmacies to deliver medicines to shielded population and, since March, we have made available £350 million in extra advance payments to alleviate cash flow pressures.

■ Public Health: Dental Services

Mr Stephen Morgan:

[58774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on public health of the number of dental practices that will reopen in June 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The gradual reopening of routine dentistry is in line with the gradual resumption of routine care across the National Health Service and wider healthcare sector as the pandemic passed its peak and overall demands on the NHS eased. Opticians have now also reopened.

No direct assessment is made of the individual risk to public health of restarting routine care. All healthcare organisations, as well as using infection control procedures to minimise risk of direct transmission between clinicians and patients, are required to ensure patients and staff follow standard social distancing requirements in areas such as reception.

For dentistry NHS England and NHS Improvement issued a standard operating procedure earlier this month setting out detailed guidance on how dentists can restart face to face dentistry safely. NHS England and NHS Improvement dental guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/dental-practice/>

Dentists are responsible for ensuring that they follow safe practice taking into account available official guidance.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus

Dr Matthew Offord:

[66851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has issued guidance to local authorities on ensuring that social care funding appeals continue during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Complaints and escalation procedures remain the same as before the pandemic. Anyone who is unhappy about the way in which a local authority carries out a financial assessment for charging can make representations to the local authority through the complaints procedure which all local authorities are required to have.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has restarted suspended complaints and anticipates reopening for new complaints in the coming weeks. Members of the public will not lose their right of appeal, and complaints regarding the COVID-19 outbreak period will be considered in due course. The Ombudsman is not an emergency service, and members of the public are required by law to first have their complaints investigated by their council or care provider. The Ombudsman has also set up a helpline to give advice and support to concerned members of the public.

HOME OFFICE

■ Antisemitism

Alex Sobel:

[18972]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time in days is between the report of an anti-Semitic hate crime and conviction of the offender.

James Brokenshire:

The Ministry of Justice does not record statistics in this way and so it is not possible to answer your question directly; prosecutions and convictions for crimes of this nature are recorded under the legislation of the specific offence they take, which

means that there is no way to extract the data for anti-Semitic hate crime specifically as it would be recorded as 'assault' or a different category depending on the nature of the offence.

■ Assaults On Police: Ethnic Groups

Philip Davies:

[64873]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many assaults on police officers there were by ethnicity of police officer in each of the last three years; and what the ethnicity was of each of the perpetrators.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects data on the number of assaults on police officers and these are published quarterly by the Office for National Statistics. The latest figures, for the year ending December 2019, can be accessed on the ONS website (available here):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/criminenglandandwalesappendixtables>

However, it not possible to identify the ethnicity all victims and perpetrators involved in assaults of police officers in data held centrally.

■ Asylum

Anneliese Dodds:

[28754]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the date was of receipt by her Department of the oldest outstanding further submission relating to an asylum claim.

Chris Philp:

Our records indicate that the oldest outstanding Further Submission relating to an asylum claim was received on 18 October 2005.

UK Visas and Immigration has undertaken exercises to review the oldest Further Submissions cases. Where more complex issues arise, it can take time to progress the decision on a case, but we keep all cases under regular review, and they are decided as soon as it is possible to do so.

The Home Office does not routinely publish information on the timing of further submissions. However, the Home Office does publish information on the number of main asylum applications awaiting an initial decision and this can be found in table ASY_04 of the published Immigration statistics

www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement

■ Asylum: Families

Caroline Lucas:

[64880]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Draft Working Text For An Agreement Between The United Kingdom Of Great Britain And Northern Ireland And The European Union On The Transfer Of Unaccompanied Asylum-

Seeking Children, what comparative assessment she has made of the effect of (a) that text and (b) the Dublin III Regulation on the requirement of the UK and EU Member States to facilitate family reunion; and if she will make it her policy to include an appeal mechanism in that text for decisions on family reunion.

Chris Philp:

This Government is committed to the principle of family reunion and to supporting vulnerable children. The UK published the draft legal text of our proposed agreement with the EU on the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on 19 May.

Our offer reflects the specified family members and relatives that Parliament approved in Section 17 of the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018. This offer also reflects the family members and relatives who unaccompanied children can be reunited with under the Dublin III Regulation.

Our draft legal text is designed to cover the overarching principles of our proposed arrangements, not the operational detail of any final arrangements. Our approach is for operational issues to be agreed subsequently, once the overarching principles have been established.

■ **Asylum: Housing**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[64948]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has received legal advice on whether the ban on evictions due to the covid-19 outbreak applies to people who have been granted refugee status and are living in accommodation for asylum-seekers.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seekers who are granted refugee status are normally given notice that they must leave any accommodation that has been provided to them by the Home Office within 28 days, as they may now take employment and have access to mainstream benefits and housing assistance from their local authority. Whilst this process was paused on 27 March for a period of three months, we are currently reviewing plans about appropriate timing to resume issuing notices in individual cases in a carefully phased and measured way and have been having discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Local Authorities and others on the arrangements.

The timing of those decisions is not affected by the current restrictions on evicting tenants from private rental properties. Those arrangements do not apply to those in asylum support accommodation. This is confirmed in paragraph 2.2 of the Government's guidance to landlords and tenants, which can be found at: MHCLG guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888843/Updated_Landlord_and_Tenant_Guidance.pdf

■ Asylum: Vetting

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[62328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate security vetting of asylum seekers before they enter dispersal accommodation.

Chris Philp:

The United Kingdom has a statutory obligation to provide destitute asylum seekers with accommodation, transportation and cash/subsistence support whilst their application for asylum is being considered. The cost of this is covered by the taxpayer.

Security and criminal record checks are made as part of an asylum claim. No further checks are made prior to the dispersal of an asylum seeker, however, our service providers will report any criminal and suspicious behaviour identified during inspections.

Individuals accommodated under the immigration bail provision are accommodated in separate accommodation to asylum seekers.

■ Clothing: Sales

Ben Bradley:

[\[64316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with representatives from Amazon on the sale of Blue Lives Murder merchandise in the UK; and what steps she is taking to prevent the sale of such merchandise.

Kit Malthouse:

Unless prohibited by UK legislation, decisions around the sale of merchandise are for retailers to make. The Home Secretary and I are appalled at the existence of the Blue Lives Murder merchandise and strongly support the Police Federation's campaign to encourage retailers to stop selling it.

Our remarkable police courageously serve our country and keep us safe - they deserve our utmost respect and support.

■ Domestic Abuse: Speech and Language Disorders

Geraint Davies:

[\[64810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that information on domestic abuse support is made available in a format accessible to people with speech, language and communication needs.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government has taken a number of steps to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse are aware and able to access the support services they need. We have published specific advice on gov.uk to guide victims to the most appropriate support for their individual needs. This includes links to disability specialist services and charities offering resources in different languages.

This advice and guidance has been extensively promoted through the Home Secretary's awareness raising campaign #YouAreNotAlone. In order to ensure that the campaign's information is readily accessible, those materials have been translated into 15 priority languages.

The Home Secretary also announced £2 million funding to assist domestic abuse organisations by bolstering helplines and ensuring they could continue to run as normal during COVID-19. £1.2 million has thus far been allocated, including in support of charities such as Sign Health which provides domestic abuse service support for deaf people in British Sign Language.

Geraint Davies: [\[64812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is able to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of (a) adults and (b) children who have experienced domestic abuse.

Geraint Davies: [\[64813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and (b) Secretary of State for Education on the role of speech and language therapists in supporting (i) adults and (ii) children who have experienced domestic abuse.

Geraint Davies: [\[64814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the (a) Secretary of State Health and Social Care and (b) Secretary of State for Education on the effect of witnessing domestic abuse on the development of children's speech, language and communication skills.

Victoria Atkins:

Domestic abuse has a devastating impact on children and young people. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact their health, wellbeing and development, with lasting effects into adulthood.

The Home Office liaises regularly with the Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Education on safeguarding issues and the provision of appropriate support services to victims of domestic abuse. It is recognised that early speech and language is an important protective factor for child health and development.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is responsible for assessing, monitoring and publishing information about the provision of services for victims and survivors. This will include speech, language and communication therapy, amongst other services.

■ Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[65131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the merits of allowing Tier 4 applications from international students to be processed without biometrics for students in countries where visa centres remain closed.

Kevin Foster:

Students, like other visa applicants, are required to attend a visa application centre (VAC) to provide documents and enrol their biometrics, this is a minimum mandated security requirement for all visa national travellers to the UK.

Biometrics play a significant role in delivering security and facilitation in the border and immigration system. They enable quick and robust identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals subject to immigration control.

As restrictions continue to be lifted by governments, overseas VACs are reopening, enabling students to apply for the required visa to study in the UK. As centres reopen, details of these will be published on our commercial partner websites. As of 29th June, 113 visa application centres have reopened.

UKVI operations and the Education sector are working closely to ensure student applications are not impacted by earlier closures as a result of Covid-19.

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Mergers

Mark Garnier:

[\[64178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the judicial reviews brought by Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Authority against their proposed merger, what steps she is taking to ensure that legal processes do not prevent the delivery of future efficient and safe mergers.

Kit Malthouse:

In March 2020, the Court of Appeal refused permission for the FRAs in West Mercia to appeal the High Court's judgment on the transfer of fire governance to the PCC for West Mercia, bringing to end the judicial review. Further JR proceedings have now become redundant in light of current developments.

It is disappointing that lengthy legal action by the FRAs in West Mercia has meant that we have not yet been able to implement a transfer of governance that we considered to be in the interest of the local community.

We remain strongly committed to supporting PCCs to take on fire governance where a case exists, and I look forward to reviewing any updated proposal the newly elected PCC may decide to bring forward after the elections. We will be working with the sector in the meantime to consider the lessons learned from this process.

■ Hezbollah

Andrew Rosindell: [66826]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 62325 on Hezbollah, for what reasons her Department does not collect information on (a) investigations and (b) charges for displaying the flag or other symbols of (i) Hezbollah and (ii) other proscribed organisations.

Andrew Rosindell: [66827]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 62325 on Hezbollah, if her Department will (a) collect and (b) publish information on the number of (i) investigations and (ii) charges for (A) displaying the flag or other symbols of and (B) other promotion of (1) Hezbollah and (2) other proscribed organisations.

James Brokenshire:

The Government takes proscription offences seriously. Investigations into the activities of proscribed organisations or individuals who may be members or supporters of proscribed organisations are an operational matter for the police and intelligence agencies. It would not be appropriate to publish data on intelligence related matters.

The Government publishes quarterly national statistics on the use of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent relevant legislation in Great Britain. This includes information on arrests, charges and convictions for proscription offences. The most recent publication up to year ending March 2020, was published on 11 June on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-financial-year-ending-march-2020>.

The quarterly publications establish transparency by ensuring that data is publicly available on the use of police powers in a consistently categorised way. As with all crime statistics published by the Home Office, the data published in the Terrorism statistics are offence based, where police provide a count of the number of offences recorded. Data providers are not required to provide further detail on events leading to the arrest, as to do so would place a disproportionate burden on the organisations responsible. This includes the National Counter-Terrorism Police Operations Centre, the Crown Prosecution Service's Counter-Terrorism Division, the Metropolitan Police Service and the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters. As with all Official Statistics, we continually review outputs taking account of user needs.

■ Human Trafficking: Victims

Sir Edward Davey: [64841]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of victims of trafficking were referred to (a) legal and (b) housing support in each of the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

Tackling human trafficking and modern slavery remains a top priority for this government and we are committed to stamping out this abhorrent crime.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the system for identifying and providing support to victims of modern slavery. Whilst in the NRM system, confirmed adult victims of modern slavery can access a minimum of 90 days specialist support including accommodation, subsistence, counselling, access to mental, physical and dental health services, and signposting to legal support. In England and Wales, this support is provided through the Victim Care Contract (VCC), which is currently operated by The Salvation Army.

Potential and confirmed victims receiving support through the VCC are provided with accommodation if this is needed and the victim has no access to alternative accommodation via other services. Victims requiring access to legal support are offered assistance and signposting by their support worker.

The Home Office does not record specific data on the proportion of victims signposted for legal support or referrals to housing support provided outside the VCC.

■ Police: Biometrics**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[64839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many biometric records have been obtained by police forces using automatic facial recognition in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

No information is centrally held on the number of biometric records obtained by police forces using live facial recognition systems. Facial images of passers by which do not match facial images of suspects on a watchlist are deleted immediately.

■ Police: Mobile Phones**Chi Onwurah:**[\[64186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a statutory code to ensure that laws on mobile data extraction are clear in relation to the findings of the Information Commissioner's Office findings on the use of mobile phone extraction by police forces, published on 18 June 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office, along with policing partners and the Crown Prosecution Service, is considering the recommendations made by the Information Commissioner on mobile phone extraction by police forces.

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 is supporting the College on this work.

■ Police: Restraint Techniques

Philip Davies:

[\[64874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have died as a direct result of police restraint or use of force, by ethnicity, in each of the last 10 years.

Kit Malthouse:

Every death in custody is a tragedy, and we are committed to delivering meaningful and lasting change to prevent deaths in custody.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) publish figures for deaths during or following police contact each year. The data includes ethnicity but does not state whether restraint caused the death. This report presents figures on deaths during or following police contact that happened within a financial year.

These figures cover deaths that happen whilst a person is being arrested or taken into detention, including deaths that occur in or on the way to hospital following transfer from the scene of arrest or police custody. They do not include suicides that occur after a person has been released from police custody. It provides a definitive set of figures for England and Wales, and an overview of the nature and circumstances in which these deaths occurred.

Figures on annual deaths during or following police contact statistics are published on the IOPC website

■ Police: Sick Leave

Layla Moran:

[\[64309\]](#)

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

Kit Malthouse:

The number of days police officers have taken off work for mental health reasons is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of police officers on long-term absence as at 31st March each year, including long-term absence for sickness. Long-term absence includes officers on leave for 28 days or more. However, detailed information on the reason for the absence is not collected.

These data are available in the Absence Open Data tables published alongside the annual 'Police workforce' statistical bulletin, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables>

■ Refugees

Caroline Lucas:

[\[64881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to work with the (a) UNHCR and (b) the International Organisation for Migration to tackle delays in refugee resettlement as a result of (a) testing, (b) self-isolation and (iii) delays with travel documents; and when her Department plans to commence the resettlement programmes.

Chris Philp:

It is not currently possible to undertake resettlement activity due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The resumption of resettlement is dependent upon a number of factors including the restarting of flights from refugee-hosting countries; the lifting of restrictions imposed by the governments of those countries; the ability of our international partners to operate safely; the reopening of the UK's visa application centres and local authority capability and capacity to receive refugees.

The situation is being constantly monitored, including through regular bilateral engagement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration.

■ Telephone Tapping

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[64840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many phone taps have been authorised for the (a) police and (b) security services in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

Between 2014 – 2018, there were 15,970 targeted interception warrants (including phone taps) authorised by a Secretary of State, or for a small number of cases relating to serious crimes, by a Minister of the Scottish Government:

2014 – 2,795

2015 – 3,057

2016 – 3,007

2017 – 3,535

2018 – 3,576

Due to the method in which the data is collected, it is difficult to attribute specific numbers to the police and the security services, respectively. The figures above cover all warrant-requesting organisations across Government.

Figures for 2019 are not yet available. They will be published in the 2019 Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Annual Report.

■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel

Rehman Chishti:

[64895]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent illegal crossings of the English Channel.

Chris Philp:

Facilitating these crossings is illegal and no one should be attempting them in the first place. France, from where almost all embark, is a manifestly safe country with a fully functioning asylum system. Any of these migrants needing asylum should claim it in France. Those seeking to cross must traverse some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. It is a reckless and dangerous crossing, putting the lives of the people who attempt it at serious risk – including children and babies.

The Government is working flat out to put a complete stop to these crossings, and all attempts to reach the UK clandestinely and action is being taken on a daily basis.

The National Crime Agency, Immigration Enforcement, Border Force and the UK Police are working closely with French authorities to crack down on the criminals who facilitate the crossings. There is a UK-France Coordination and Information Centre opened in Calais which opened in November 2018

This law enforcement response is delivering results. French law enforcement prevented over 1000 people from crossing by small boats in April and May 2020.

In 2019, Immigration Enforcement made 418 arrests, leading to 203 convictions for a total of 437 years. Out of these, 259 arrests and 100 convictions were for people smuggling. Immigration Enforcement carried out 841 disruptions against organised crime gangs and individuals engaged in organised immigration crime, 404 of which were related to people smuggling. So far in 2020, 21 people smugglers have been convicted and put behind bars as a result of Immigration Enforcement investigations, with more investigations underway.

The UK Government has also returned over 155 small boats arrivals back to Europe since January 2019 using the legal channels available. We have a further 686 return cases which we are currently urgently progressing.

There is more we need to do beyond this. We are working on developing tactics to prevent crossings at sea, and on ways to rapidly return those who do get across. This may require primary legislation and new agreements with the French Government. These are currently under active discussion. The Prime Minister directly discussed the issue with President Macron on 18 June and the Home Secretary is in constant contact with her opposite number, the French Interior Minister. We will not rest until the crossings are entirely stopped.

■ Visas: Overseas Visitors

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[66843]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for visitor visas have been received by her Department in each of the last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on entry clearance visas in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'. Data on visitor visa applications are published in table Vis_D01 of the entry clearance visa detailed datasets. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to the year ending March 2020.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the summary tables. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on visas.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the 'Research and statistics calendar'.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Business Premises: Landlords****Caroline Lucas:**[\[67608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2020 to Question 64131 on business premises: landlords and with reference to the 19 June 2020 voluntary code of practice for commercial property relationships, if he will set out the criteria by which he will monitor the effect of the code and decide whether further mandatory provisions are necessary.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Code of Practice aims to help commercial landlords and tenants to come to balanced agreements regarding the payment of rent at a time when many tenants have been unable to trade as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions. It was developed in partnership with industry bodies representing both landlords and tenants sectors and has been widely welcomed as a means of encouraging a constructive dialogue.

The Government has always monitored the financial health of the commercial property sector, and continues to do so closely. The steering group for the Code of Practice have agreed to survey their members to understand its impact, and we will also engage with other organisations that are supporting the code to do the same. This, and regular discussion with representatives of both landlords, tenants and the wider commercial property industry, will inform any future interventions that might be necessary and appropriate to support this essential element of the nation's economy.

■ Coastal Communities Fund**Scott Mann:**[\[66940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the next tranche of coastal communities funding will be made available; and how local organisations will be able to access it.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Coastal Communities Fund supports coastal projects delivering sustainable growth and jobs across the UK. Since 2012 the Fund has awarded grants to 369 projects across the UK to the value of £229 million.

Round 5 was announced in 2018 and 2019, with £50.7 million going to 47 projects. A manifesto commitment was made to extend the Fund to 2022 helping to continue to drive growth in UK coastal areas

Whether there is another round of the Coastal Communities Fund is a matter for the next Spending Review.

■ Community Assets**Sally-Ann Hart:**[\[67818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to ensure that communities can continue to access publicly funded community assets and projects that have been subsequently bought up by private individuals and organisations.

Luke Hall:

The key initiative which allows community groups an opportunity to take publicly or privately-owned buildings or land into community ownership is the assets of community value scheme introduced through the Localism Act 2011. The scheme however does not place any further restrictions on the asset after a sale is complete. The Government continues to recognise the value of community ownership and access to assets, and we have set out our commitment to strengthen the rights of community groups to protect and take over local assets and to introduce a £150 million Community Ownership Fund to support groups who wish to do so.

■ Evictions: Coronavirus**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[68677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a moratorium on evictions in areas where local covid-19 lockdowns are in force from 24 August 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

Lifting the suspension on possession cases in the county court from 24 August is an important step towards ending the lockdown.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is working closely with the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary on arrangements, including new rules, to ensure that when the courts re-open they are better able to address the need for appropriate protection of all parties.

In the event of any local lockdown, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service would follow Public Health England and government guidance issued at the time. The listing

of cases remains a judicial function and as such listing arrangements would be led by the local judiciary.

■ Freehold: Service Charges

Matt Western:

[\[68411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to give freeholders who pay charges for the maintenance of communal areas and facilities on a private or mixed use estate access to equivalent rights as leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of such service charges.

Luke Hall:

The Government intends to legislate to give freeholders on private and mixed tenure estates equivalent rights to leaseholders to challenge the reasonableness of estate rentcharges as well as a right to apply to the First-tier Tribunal to appoint a new manager for the provision of services covered by estate rentcharges. We will bring forward legislation as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

■ Housing: Older People

Helen Hayes:

[\[68735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the research from Anchor Hanover and Sonnet demonstrating the social value of retirement and extra care housing; and what plans he has to increase investment in specialist older people's housing.

Luke Hall:

I welcome this report, which helps underline the Government's own view that housing with support and care plays a vital role in enabling older people to live independently, as well as delivering wider benefits to society. The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing, including sheltered and specialist supported housing for older people. We announced at Budget 2020 that we are investing £12 billion to build affordable homes between 2021/22 and 2025/26. This will be the biggest cash investment in affordable housing for a decade and will deliver up to 180,000 additional affordable homes, including for older people and others with support needs. We are committed to continuing to work closely with the sector to improve the diversity of housing options available to older people.

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[\[68708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether local authorities in devolved areas are eligible to apply for his Department's covid-19 local authority funding scheme in relation to lost income.

Steve Reed:

[\[68709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to publish further details of the process for local authorities to apply for additional funding to help cover lost income as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Reed:

[\[68710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether lost commercial income is included in his Department's scheme to reimburse local authorities for lost income as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

On 2 July the Secretary of State announced a new component of the Government's comprehensive COVID-19 councils support package, to address the impact of lost non-tax income from sales, fees, and charges.

The income scheme applies to England only and aims to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charges which they had reasonably budgeted for the current financial year. Under the scheme councils will bear the first 5 per cent of losses compared to their budgeted income – reflecting the fact these income sources are by their nature volatile from one year to the next – and the Government will cover 75 per cent of losses beyond this.

A set of principles will be used to define relevant income which is eligible under the new scheme. Further details of the scope of this scheme, including the eligibility principles, will be shared with councils ahead of the start of the process of collecting, calculating, and compensating for relevant losses. Individual local authorities will be responsible for making sure that the claims they make meet these principles. The scheme will not compensate for lost commercial investment income.

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[\[68711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he last attended his Department's weekly call with local authority leaders.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Secretary of State chaired a COVID-19 webinar for all council leaders and chief executives, on Thursday 25 June.

■ Local Government: Flags

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[66820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with local authorities on flying and promoting county flags on Historic County Flags day on 23 July 2020.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[66821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he is taking steps to ensure that historic county flags are flown in Parliament square on Historic County Flags day 23 July 2020.

Mr Simon Clarke:

I am a huge supporter of our historic counties which are an integral part of local identity and belonging. Over the last year or more, we have been active in promoting the role of our historic counties in celebrating the history and traditions of our nation. We will use the opportunity presented by Historic County Flags Day on 23 July to raise their profile once more, but given the wider pressures resulting from the COVID-19 emergency, we envisage any celebrations this year at national and local level will be done virtually or via social media.

■ **Public Lavatories: Coronavirus**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[66859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what scientific advice the Government has issued to local authorities on (a) the risk of public toilets spreading covid-19 and (a) opening public toilets as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Public hygiene is of the utmost importance, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, and enabling access to toilets safely is vital.

Government has made clear through COVID-19 guidance that public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The guidance outlines measures such as signs to promote good hygiene, providing suitable handwashing and hand drying facilities, and increasing frequency of cleaning facilities.

The Environment Minister and I recently wrote to local authorities with details on the guidance for reopening public toilets.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Christianity: Oppression**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[65970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to (a) support and (b) help ensure provision of (i) medicines and (ii) other supplies to persecuted Christian communities during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Cleverly:

The UK is using our foreign aid budget and British expertise to stop the spread of the global coronavirus outbreak, find a vaccine and save lives around the world, including in the UK. So far £764 million of UK aid has been pledged to help end this pandemic as quickly as possible.

As a leading donor to the COVID-19 global response and one of the biggest humanitarian donors globally, we are working with our partners to ensure essential commodities and services are provided to those who need it the most, in line with international humanitarian principles. Through our support to the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan, we have particularly advocated to ensure assistance reaches the most marginalised and vulnerable people, including religious minorities, who will be the worst affected by this crisis.

■ Department for International Development: East Kilbride**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[67681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether there are plans for voluntary redundancies at her Department's office in East Kilbride after her Department's merger with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

DFID's existing office in East Kilbride will become part of the new Department's estate. Some roles in East Kilbride may change due to business needs and any changes will be handled in accordance with relevant civil service policy and guidance. It is too early to be able to say precisely what effect those changes will have. We can confirm that there will be no compulsory redundancies for DFID employees as a result of the decision to create the new Department and any changes will be handled in accordance with relevant civil service policy and guidance.

■ Department for International Development: Gender**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[67779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many gender technical experts are working in her Department as at 1 July 2020.

Wendy Morton:

As of 1 July 2020, the Department for International Development has 102 Social Development Advisers, all of whom are technical experts on gender equality and shape DFID's work in this area. These advisers undergo continuous assessments and are quality assured as they progress up the grades, in terms of both depth and breadth of this expertise, to ensure that they can effectively advance gender equality and women's rights globally.

■ Department for International Development: Public Expenditure

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[67778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the planned level of promissory note issuance was to each institution in (a) calendar year 2020 and (b) financial year 2020-21 in the Main Estimates.

Wendy Morton:

DFID uses promissory notes with organisations such as international development banks. A promissory note allows that organisation to commit to an activity in full, in advance of funding being transferred.

DFID's made no adjustment at Main Estimates 2020-21 to the Net Cash Requirement as a result of Promissory Notes.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[67683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the humanitarian effect of the covid-19 pandemic on children in the developing world.

James Cleverly:

Children are particularly vulnerable during infectious disease outbreaks. As many as 1.5 billion children have been out of school as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic has resulted in considerable changes to the essential environment that a child's well-being, development and protection rely upon.

Whilst children were already facing a learning crisis before COVID-19, school closures also put children at risk of malnutrition, making them more susceptible to illness, but also child labour, neglect, abuse and lost learning.

In light of the pandemic, the UK has pivoted its education programmes in 18 countries to provide education and keep pupils safe. For example, DFID Syria has expanded its education programmes to protect vulnerable children by providing hygiene kits, stipends for teachers and home learning materials. At a global level, we have provided £20 million to UNICEF to support the continuity of essential social services for children, women and vulnerable populations, including child protection.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: International Organisations

Jim Shannon:

[\[67645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government plans to maintain the same board representatives on (a) Gavi, (b) CEPI, (c) UNITAID, (d) the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and (e) other multilateral organisations after her Department's merger with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Wendy Morton:

As we create the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the government is clear that the UK will remain a champion of the international system. COVID-19 has demonstrated that a strong, well-functioning multilateral system is in the UK's interests, and this merger will bring together our overseas efforts on aid and diplomacy so we can maximise our influence across the world.

There are no current plans to change our level of representation in multilateral organisations. Our multilateral relationships and priorities will be considered as part of the Integrated Review, which will set an ambitious vision for the future of the UK as an active, internationalist, problem-solving and burden-sharing nation.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Sustainable Development**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[67676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she is taking steps to ensure that the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office focuses its single departmental plan on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK remains committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs will play an important role in post-COVID-19 recovery, recognising the connection between healthy lives, healthy societies and a healthy environment. As the Prime Minister affirmed on 28 May, we owe it to future generations to build back better, basing our recovery on a fairer, greener and more resilient global economy, and to get our shared goals back on track, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

International Assistance: Coronavirus**Alicia Kearns:**[\[67811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she has taken to ensure that the G20 action plan to tackle the economic impact of covid-19 does not exclude (a) people in conflict settings and (b) displaced people.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government is committed to supporting people in conflict settings and displaced persons. The UK played a leading role in the development of the G20 Action Plan – 'Supporting the Global Economy through the Covid-19 Pandemic'. This includes ensuring the Plan has a strong emphasis and clear commitments on helping the poorest countries - many of which are conflict settings with high numbers of displaced people. We will continue to work closely with G20 members and other partners to ensure robust implementation of the Plan's commitments and to support people and countries most vulnerable to the economic impact of COVID-19.

■ Overseas Aid

Jim Shannon:

[\[67646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to help ensure that UK aid reaches (a) vulnerable religious minorities and (b) other vulnerable groups of people.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government works to ensure that all aid reaches the most vulnerable, including those from religious communities and other vulnerable groups, such as disabled people and women and girls.

The UK is committed to delivering its humanitarian aid during the COVID-19 pandemic according to internationally recognised humanitarian principles. These principles ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to those who are most vulnerable and most in need of this assistance. This includes vulnerable religious communities and other vulnerable groups, who are assessed by our partners when determining those most in need of protection and assistance.

Vulnerable groups will experience COVID-19 outbreaks differently. COVID-19 is likely to reinforce their marginalised position in society, their experience of discrimination, violence and stigma, and further limit their access to essential support and services. For this reason, guidance was circulated across DFID highlighting that inclusion must be central to our response and the specific contexts and needs of vulnerable religious communities and other vulnerable groups should be taken into account when developing practical programmes to tackle COVID-19.

On 8 June, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, hosted a roundtable with faith leaders and the chief executives of faith-based development organisations. The meeting covered how faith groups are contributing to the response to COVID-19; where those interventions have been most effective; the challenges for faith groups, and, how DFID could work more effectively with faith groups.

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[67671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what time planned timescale is for the (a) review and (b) prioritisation of her Department's programmes; and if she will take steps to ensure that her Department's merger with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not delay that process.

Wendy Morton:

DFID is working closely with the FCO and other ODA-spending departments to consider how best to manage the 0.7% commitment in the coming year. A cross-HMG process is underway, and no decision has been taken but we are considering the full range of our work. As the Prime Minister has stated, the government will remain committed to the 0.7% target through the creation of the new FCDO.

■ Overseas Aid: Armed Conflict**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[67672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will maintain the Government's policy that 50 per cent of its official development assistance budget is allocated to fragile or conflict-affected states.

James Cleverly:

DFID's work in fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS) is vital. DFID has consistently spent at least 50% of its Official Development Assistance in fragile and conflict affected states from 2015 to 2017. Figures for 2018 will be published in due course.

The Government's 0.7% GNI commitment is directly linked to the size of our economy and in light of the impact of COVID-19, we are reviewing our programmes to make our response as effective as possible.

■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[68741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to ensure that Official Development Assistance reaches the most vulnerable people during the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has so far pledged up to £764 million of UK aid and we are at the forefront of the global response. This includes £296 million to support resilience in vulnerable countries, as well as support to UK charities and international organisations to help reduce mass infections in developing countries.

We are leading the way by pushing for coordinated international action to open fiscal space in vulnerable countries, allowing them to increase the resources available to respond to the crisis. We are providing support through our Rapid Response Facility in numerous Fragile and Conflict Affected States to reduce the spread of the pandemic, protect vulnerable communities, provide livelihoods support, assist those with disabilities, and address gender-based violence.

It is absolutely in Britain's interest to use ODA to make the world a healthier, safer and more prosperous place. We will continue to be guided by our responsibilities under the International Development Act, including a commitment to poverty reduction.

■ Overseas Aid: Poverty**Daisy Cooper:**[\[67783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will ensure that reductions in aid spending take place last in relation to low income countries and first in relation to upper middle income countries in accordance with provisions in the International Development Act 2002 on alleviating poverty.

Wendy Morton:

All government departments are considering how their plans need to change in light of the risk of a recession, linked to the impact of COVID-19. DFID is working with the FCO and other ODA spending departments to assess how to manage the 0.7% commitment this year, and we will do this in accordance with provisions in the 2002 International Development Act. It is absolutely in Britain's interest to use ODA to make the world a healthier, safer and more prosperous place, either through tackling coronavirus, supporting the world's poorest, providing humanitarian aid in crises or helping girls get a quality education.

Overseas Aid: Religion**Tracey Crouch:**[\[67616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her the Government is taking to help ensure that recipients of UK aid from (a) Christian and (b) other religious minorities not are not discriminated against because of their faith.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government works to ensure that recipients of UK Aid, including Christian and other minority religious communities, are not discriminated against because of their faith. The UK is committed to delivering its humanitarian aid according to internationally recognised humanitarian principles. These principles ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to those who are most vulnerable and most in need of this assistance irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. This includes minority religious communities, who are assessed by our partners when determining those most in need of protection and assistance.

Vulnerable minority groups will experience COVID-19 outbreaks differently. COVID-19 is likely to reinforce their marginalised position in society, their experience of discrimination, violence and stigma, and further limit their access to essential support and services. For this reason, guidance was circulated across DFID highlighting that inclusion must be central to our response and the specific contexts and needs of vulnerable religious communities and other vulnerable groups should be taken into account when developing practical programmes to tackle COVID-19.

On 8 June, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, hosted a roundtable to hear from faith leaders and faith-based development organisations about whether minority faith communities were facing specific challenges during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Jim Shannon:[\[67647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that religious identity as an indicator of vulnerability in certain communities is taken into account when allocating UK aid.

Nigel Adams:

DFID is committed to working with all its partners, including faith-based organisations, to ensure that the most vulnerable people and groups are prioritised for humanitarian

assistance, in line with international humanitarian principles. This includes religious and ethnic groups who are at risk of discrimination and persecution.

We work closely with our partners to ensure they are rigorously assessing vulnerability and needs (including those linked with religious identity) ahead of allocating assistance as well as conducting robust monitoring to ensure that aid is reaching those most in need.

Jim Shannon:

[\[67648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that Christians and other religious minorities do not face discrimination at the frontlines of aid distribution as a result of their faith.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government works to ensure that recipients of UK Aid, including Christian and other minority religious communities, are not discriminated against because of their faith. The UK is committed to delivering its humanitarian aid according to internationally recognised humanitarian principles. These principles ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to those who are most vulnerable and most in need of this assistance irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. This includes minority religious communities, who are assessed by our partners when determining those most in need of protection and assistance.

Vulnerable religious minority groups will experience COVID-19 outbreaks differently. COVID-19 is likely to reinforce their marginalised position in society, their experience of discrimination, violence and stigma, and further limit their access to essential support and services. For this reason, guidance was circulated across DFID highlighting that inclusion must be central to our response and the specific contexts and needs of vulnerable religious communities and other vulnerable groups should be taken into account when developing practical programmes to tackle COVID-19.

On 8 June, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, hosted a roundtable to hear from faith leaders and faith-based development organisations to discuss how minority faith communities were facing specific challenges during this COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Yemen: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[67781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government's planned support in response to covid-19 in Yemen will have an effect on the level of funding and other support for humanitarian needs as a result of war, hunger and waterborne and infectious diseases in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK's £160 million commitment to Yemen for this financial year (2020/21) will help tackle the spread of COVID-19 and continue to address existing humanitarian needs.

We recognise that alongside the significant direct impacts of COVID-19, the virus is also exacerbating existing humanitarian needs in Yemen.

UK funding is responding this year by providing over 700,000 medical consultations and a much needed boost to 4,000 health centres, whilst also providing support to at least 300,000 vulnerable people each month to help them buy food and household essentials and providing 1 million people with improved water supply and basic sanitation.

■ Yemen: Overseas Aid

Daisy Cooper:

[\[67780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she plans to maintain the (a) 2 June 2020 commitment to allocate £160 million in aid to Yemen and (b) level of all other planned assistance to that country.

James Cleverly:

I announced the UK's commitment of £160 million in new aid for the current financial year (2020/21) at the 2020 Yemen Humanitarian Pledging Conference on 2 June.

This was the third highest pledge at the conference and brings the total UK commitment to nearly £1 billion since the conflict began in 2015.

I can assure you that Yemen remains a key priority for the UK Government and that we have every intention of meeting our commitment. We have already provided 32% of this funding to our humanitarian and development partners operating in Yemen and hope to have disbursed over 50% by the end of July.

The UK has also announced up to £764 million of aid to support the global efforts to combat the outbreak of COVID-19. This includes contributing £150 million to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust which will provide the world's poorest countries, including Yemen, with IMF debt relief over the next six months.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Imports: Meat and Poultry

Luke Pollard:

[\[68425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the import of (a) chlorine or acid-washed chicken, (b) hormone-treated beef, (c) ractopamine fed pork, (d) dairy products from bovine somatotropin treated cows, and (e) eggs from battery caged hens; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The approach of HM Government to food standards in trade deals is clear. We remain firmly committed to upholding our high environmental, food safety and animal welfare standards.

As we take back control of our laws from the EU, we will decide how we set and maintain our own laws, standards and regulations. When the Transition Period ends,

we will be a global leader in environmental protection and animal welfare standards, maintaining the high-quality of our produce for consumers at home and overseas.

The Hon. Gentleman will know that some standards, such as the ban on the use of growth-promoting hormones, are already in domestic legislation. Others, such as the ban on chlorine washing of poultry, will be brought onto our statute book through the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

The United Kingdom's food standards, for both domestic production and imports, are overseen by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. These agencies provide independent advice to HM Government and the devolved administration in Scotland respectively. They will continue to do so in order to ensure that all food imports comply with the United Kingdom's high standards.

■ Trade Agreements: Dispute Resolution

Sarah Olney:

[\[68750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy not to include investor state dispute settlements in future trade agreements; and will she make a statement

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has already negotiated investment agreements with Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions with over 90 trading partners. The precise details of any future Free Trade Agreement are a matter for formal negotiations, and we would not seek to pre-empt these discussions.

HM Government recognises the important role that investment protections with ISDS can play in protecting British investors abroad – including pensioners across the country through their pension funds, and SMEs. Where ISDS is included in future agreements, we will seek to ensure fair outcomes of claims and high ethical standards for arbitrators, with increased transparency and efficiency of proceedings.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Luke Pollard:

[\[68426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate she has made of the proportional effect on Gross Domestic Product of the (a) beef, (b) poultry, (c) pig, (d) dairy and (e) egg farming sectors as a result of a free trade agreement with the US; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Free trade agreements can provide our farmers with a range of new opportunities including access to new markets, a reduction in US tariffs that may be as high as 26% on beef and over 25% on some cheese products, along with cheaper costs for UK agricultural inputs which will benefit our domestic producers.

Our analysis in our Scoping Assessment showed that a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US is estimated to deliver an increase in output (as measured by Gross Value Added) of between 0.05% and 0.5% for the UK's agriculture sector.

JUSTICE

■ **Juries: Coronavirus**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[68742]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to suspend temporarily the right to trial by jury to tackle the backlog of cases as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and whether his Department would be required to conduct an impact assessment before introducing that suspension.

Chris Philp:

We have now published our court recovery plan, setting out how we are recovering the operations of our courts and tribunals after the pandemic and a more detailed criminal court recovery plan will follow. We are continuing to increase capacity.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-and-tribunal-recovery-update-in-response-to-coronavirus>

We have no plans to remove the right to a trial by jury, something which I am deeply committed to.

■ **Sexual Offences: Trials**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[68713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his Department's policy is on the use of character witnesses during trials for (a) victims and (b) perpetrators of historical sexual abuse.

Chris Philp:

In criminal trials, including of offences of historical sexual abuse, rules of evidence do not permit the Crown to call evidence of the good character of a prosecution witness in order to bolster their credibility. The law assumes victims to be truthful and credible, and restricts the ways in which their veracity and credibility can be challenged by the defence; evidence of a victim's good character is therefore not relevant to what is in issue, and is not admissible.

Defendants also are assumed to be of good character unless there is evidence to the contrary. Where the prosecution does rely on bad character evidence against the defendant (and there are fewer restrictions on the admissibility of evidence of a defendant's alleged bad character than there are in relation to a witness' bad character), then character evidence might be relevant to contradict it.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Government****Simon Hoare:**[\[68732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the Written Statement of 18 March 2020, HCWS168, Addressing Northern Ireland Legacy Issues, which (a) victims groups and (b) people he has consulted on the content of that statement since that statement was published.

Mr Robin Walker:

Since the Written Statement of 18 March 2020, HCWS168, Addressing Northern Ireland Legacy Issues, the department has undertaken a number of engagements with groups funded under the Victims and Survivors Service's Victims Support Programme, at both ministerial and official level. The department has also engaged with the Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, the Victims and Survivors Service Board, and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, as well as a range of individuals from across civic society and academia. Engagement has also taken place with the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland parties.

The UK Government remains committed to making progress on legacy issues as quickly as possible, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders, including victims groups, who represent all parts of the community in Northern Ireland as part of this process.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Poverty: Families****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[66993\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to his oral contribution of 17 June 2020, Official Report column 796, what the source is for his statement that there are 400,000 fewer families living in poverty now than there were in 2010.

Boris Johnson:

I refer the Hon Member to the reply I gave to the Leader of the Opposition on 24 June 2020, Official Report, Col 1305.

Indeed, the Government believes the best way to improve children's chances is by supporting families into secure, meaningful work.

Children living in workless households are around four times more likely to be in absolute poverty (after housing costs) than those where all adults work. As of December, the number of workless households has fallen by 1 million since 2010, meaning there are over 740,000 fewer children living in a household where no one works.

TRANSPORT**■ Airports: Coronavirus****Gill Furniss:**[\[68747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that workers in airports are not affected by job losses due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The aviation sector can draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time. These measures include: HMRC's Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, including VAT deferrals; the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; HMT and the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility; and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme for large and small businesses.

If airlines or airports find themselves in trouble as a result of coronavirus, even following the Government's cross-economy wage and financial interventions, the Transport Secretary and Chancellor have confirmed that we are prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort, having exhausted all other options. Any intervention would need to represent value for money for taxpayers.

The recent announcements about proposed redundancies will be very distressing news for employees and their families. Government recognises the challenges facing the aviation industry and remains committed to an open dialogue with the sector and unions, to minimise the damage to industry and retain jobs. We encourage airports and unions to engage constructively with each other, striving to provide employees with as much certainty as possible during this challenging time.

■ Bus Services and Railways: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[66918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on enforcement of the mandatory requirement to wear face masks on (a) trains and (b) buses in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters, including on this issue. Department for Transport officials engaged closely with Home Office in designing the regulations to ensure that they achieve their public health objectives without unnecessarily burdening the police and operators; and to ensure that equalities considerations were considered and mitigated.

Rachael Maskell:[\[66919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, for what reasons it is Government policy that (a) bus and (b) train passengers are responsible for providing their own face masks or face coverings rather than the Government supplying that protective equipment to those passengers.

Rachel Maclean:

Bus and train passengers are responsible for providing their own face coverings as Government guidance is clear that face coverings can be as simple as a piece of fabric - such as a scarf or bandana - that covers the nose and mouth. As there is no set standard, we expect that everyone should be able to provide their own face covering for their journey. Face coverings are not the same as face masks. It is important that people do not use medical grade PPE masks to ensure these remain available for frontline staff.

In addition to this, to help introduce the policy we distributed over 2 million face coverings which were donated to HMG, to local transport, rail and maritime operators across the country for use by passengers and the transport workforce.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[66921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support the Government provides to bus drivers when a passenger (a) boards without a face covering or (b) removes their face covering after boarding during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The regulations include new powers for operators to deny access to a service, or direct someone to leave a service, who is not wearing a face covering and does not have an exemption. Transport operators have discretion over how they use these powers depending on operational circumstances.

As is usual practice, if a passenger is acting anti-socially or against the rules, staff will be able to call the police. The police have new powers to remove people from vehicles if they do not comply with the rules, using reasonable force if necessary.

Rachael Maskell:[\[66922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on police support for bus drivers to enforce the wearing of face coverings by passengers on public transport during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Secretary of State for Transport has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters, including on face coverings. The Home Office and the police were engaged extensively in the development of our enforcement strategy. As is usual practice, if a passenger is acting anti-socially or against the rules, staff will be able to call the police. The police have new powers to remove people from vehicles if they do not comply with the rules, using reasonable force if necessary.

Dan Carden:[\[66972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG), what steps his Department took to ensure that large bus operators had sought financial support packages before entering into the CBSSG.

Dan Carden:

[\[66973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) what steps he is taking to ensure that bus operators recoup only the costs of their operations under the CBSSG.

Dan Carden:

[\[66974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made over-payments to bus operators under the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant.

Dan Carden:

[\[66975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to monitor the potential for over-payments to be made in relation to the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG); and what processes his Department has put in place to recoup over-payments made in relation to the CBSSG.

Rachel Maclean:

As part of the terms and conditions of the Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG), operators are required to make use of existing COVID-19 related funding where possible.

The reconciliation process set out in the CBSSG guidance seeks to make operators no better or worse off than pre-Covid-19 levels, on their net costs of operating. The reconciliation process will take into account all revenues generated and costs incurred by operators while in receipt of CBSSG, including revenues and costs from both commercial and tendered services.

The Department will undertake reconciliation calculations to assess whether an overpayment of the scheme has occurred, and notify the relevant operator to make a repayment to DfT within 4 weeks of the conclusion of this calculation.

Mr William Wragg:

[\[68720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether passengers on private tour coaches will be required to socially distance while (a) wearing and (b) not wearing face coverings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Safer Travel guidance recommends that where it is not possible to keep a 2 metre distance, such as in enclosed spaces, passengers should maintain a 1 metre distance where possible and take suitable precautions, such as wearing a face covering, not directly facing other passengers and regularly washing or sanitising their hands.

■ Driving Instruction: Coronavirus

Feryal Clark:

[\[66999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department will take to ensure that all approved driving instructors receive guidance on how they can safely restart driving lessons and tests as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been the safety of its staff and the wider public. That remains its priority as it restarts its services.

Driving instructors are responsible for ensuring their services remain safe. Guidance on how they can carry out risk assessments can be found on the Health and Safety Executive's website. The DVSA will release an updated version of its standard operating procedure for driving examiners, which driving instructors might wish to refer to when developing their own health and safety procedures. The DVSA will be sending this directly to driving instructors and it will be hosted on the National Associations Strategic Partnership website.

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: Older People****Kenny MacAskil:**[\[68794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Road Safety statement of July 2019, what progress his Department has made on the introduction of a mandatory eyesight test at the age of 70 and every three years thereafter.

Rachel Maclean:

As part of the Road Safety Statement, the Department has commissioned research to explore visual impairments and road casualties, and to understand the extent to which driver eyesight problems or visual impairments pose a road safety risk in the UK. This research is nearing completion and the findings will be used to consider if there is a need to introduce a mandatory eyesight test at the age of 70 and every three years thereafter.

■ **Driving: Young People****Jim Shannon:**[\[66862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing late night driving restrictions for people aged under 21.

Rachel Maclean:

We are assessing the merits of safer driving measures for new and novice drivers, including guardian agreements for night time driving, as part of the Department's £2 million Driver 2020 research project. This work aims to make young drivers safer, more confident and more skilful in their first year of driving through non-legislative, technical or educational measures with potential to lower their risk of collisions. The project will complete in early 2022 due to being paused for coronavirus and will inform future thinking on young drivers' policy.

■ Electric Scooters: Pedestrian Areas

Mark Pritchard:

[\[66833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with the National Federation of the Blind of the UK and the Royal National Institute of Blind People on the use of e-scooters on pedestrian walkways.

Rachel Maclean:

I will soon be hosting an accessibility roundtable with stakeholders on e-scooters, and the National Federation of the Blind of the UK and the Royal National Institute of Blind People have both been invited to it. Trials of e-scooters will be starting soon, looking to gather evidence of the impacts of e-scooters for their users and other road users, including those with disabilities.

■ Motorcycles: Delivery Services

Mark Pritchard:

[\[66834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward a scheme to ensure a minimum driving standard requirement for delivery drivers who use mopeds.

Rachel Maclean:

Riders of mopeds have to complete Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) before they ride a moped on the road. This training makes sure motorcyclists can ride safely on their own and ensures a minimum standard is met.

Moped riders, like other road users, are required to comply with road traffic law and may be fined, given penalty points on their licence or disqualified from driving if they disobey the legal requirements. If they do not adopt a responsible attitude or if their use of the highway creates an unsafe environment or causes nuisance, they may be committing a number of offences.

■ Oxford-Hereford Railway Line

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[66856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has made to the Prime Minister on including the North Cotswold Line Strategic Outline Business Case improvements within the remit of the Project Speed taskforce.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State has not made any representations regarding the North Cotswold Line SOBC to the Prime Minister. Network Rail is continuing undertake a review of the business case at the Department's request, which is close to completion.

The Infrastructure Delivery Taskforce, named 'Project Speed', will be led by the Chancellor and will bring forward proposals to deliver government's public investment projects more strategically and efficiently. This will ensure we are building the right things better and faster than before. All infrastructure projects will be in scope of this work.

■ Protective Clothing: Public Transport

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[66885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the level of risk of (a) older and (b) vulnerable people catching covid-19 as a result of passengers on public transport that refuse to cover their faces.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Protecting the public, especially older and vulnerable citizens, from Covid-19 is the government's primary focus. Since Monday 15 June, it has been mandatory for passengers to wear a face covering on public transport in England, unless they are exempt for health, disability or other reasons (full list of exemptions can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators#exemptions-from-mandatory-face-coverings>). Operators are reporting high levels of compliance across the country.

Measures are in place to safeguard passengers from people who refuse to abide by this legislation. The regulations made under Public Health Act 1984 include powers for transport operators to deny access to a service, or direct someone to leave a service, who is not wearing a face covering. If a passenger still refuses to comply, there are new powers for the police or TfL authorised officers to issue fines.

■ Public Transport: Coronavirus

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[66883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the (a) general publicity regarding the new covid-19 travel regulations and passenger compliance, (b) obligation on customers to wear a face covering on public transport, (c) requirement on operators to engage, encourage and explain the new regulations to their service users and (d) enforcement action against non-compliant passengers.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

When we introduced this policy, the Secretary of State was clear that the early stages would focus on communications rather than enforcement. We are working with transport operators to ensure they are disseminating key messages to their staff and passengers, including making the exemptions clear to disability groups (Safer Transport Guidance can be found here:

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

Our approach has achieved high levels of compliance. ONS data for the week following implementation showed 84% saying they are wearing face coverings on public transport. Our guidance clearly sets out the role of operators, the police and TfL authorised enforcement officers. While the government expects the vast majority of people to comply with the changes, operators will be able to refuse travel or issue penalty fines for those who fail to wear a face covering

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[66884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of (a) trends in the use and (b) the effectiveness of (i) Stagecoach and (ii) other operator Journey Assistance Cards in (A) helping people who are exempt from wearing face coverings during the covid-19 outbreak and (B) making it clear to the public that the non-wearing of face coverings should not take place without adequate reason.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Our guidance sets out exemptions to mandatory face covering, including for health and disability reasons (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>). We are working with operators to include these in their communications, and have been clear that operators should continue to assist disabled passengers as they did before the pandemic.

There are a range of assistance cards provided to disabled people independently of Government. We do not have data to assess the trends and the effectiveness of these cards. Assistance cards can be used to help passengers identify themselves, but we are clear that passengers should not have to routinely 'prove' their exemption when challenged by transport operators.

The Department is working closely with transport operators, including Stagecoach, to understand their policies and procedures around mandatory face coverings and exemptions, and how these are working in practice.

Rachael Maskell:

[66920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on (a) the provision of face masks and (b) the effect of that provision on public confidence in accessing retail centres by public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

There are regular discussions across Government on the use of face coverings. The requirement to wear face coverings on public transport is primarily intended as a public health measure, as wearing a face covering can help people protect each other and reduce the risk of transmission in environments when social distancing is difficult to manage.

Alongside other measures such as regular hand washing and maintaining distance wherever possible, we expect that mandatory face coverings will give people confidence to travel safely where they have no other option but to use public transport. Our Safer Transport guidance makes clear that people should consider all other forms of transport, such as cycling and walking, before using public transport.

■ Public Transport: Greater London

Sarah Olney:

[68755]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) Transport for London on increasing funding to the Education and

Skills Funding Agency to increase the 16-19 bursary in London to cover travel costs after the end of free travel for under-18s in London.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport is working closely with Transport for London and the Department for Education on how the temporary suspension of free bus travel for under 18s can be operationalised. This includes considering whether there are further categories of children, in addition to those eligible under the Education Act 1996, that should receive free transport.

■ **Railway Stations: Disability**

Jim Shannon:

[\[66864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to upgrade smaller train stations to ensure that all stations are accessible to people with disabilities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have made a further £350m available through the Access for All programme, which has been allocated to projects until 2024. In addition, if the industry installs, replaces or renews station infrastructure this will need to comply with current accessibility standards.

■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

Dan Carden:

[\[66970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the COVID Emergency Management Arrangements (EMA) with Train Operating Companies (TOC), what provisions are included in the EMA to ensure that TOCs are not in a financially advantageous position under the EMA than their financial performance under their franchise agreements in the months before the covid-19 lockdown.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) temporarily suspend the normal financial mechanisms of franchise agreements, transferring all revenue and cost risk to the government. Operators are required to continue to fulfil their obligations under the EMAs for a small, pre-determined management fee. Fees are set at a maximum of 2 per cent of the cost base of the franchise before the Covid-19 pandemic began, intended to incentivise operators to meet reliability, punctuality and other targets. The maximum fee attainable was set on the basis that it will be lower than the returns attainable in operator's existing franchise agreements where they bore revenue risk.

Dan Carden:

[\[66971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the COVID Emergency Management Arrangements (EMA) with Train Operating Companies, what steps his Department took to ensure that those companies had sought financial support packages in advance of entering into the EMA.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) temporarily suspend the existing franchise agreements' financial mechanisms for an initial period of six months. They were developed at an early stage of the covid-19 crisis as a bespoke solution to address the particular circumstances of rail franchises. These include the fact that the government would face large and direct financial exposure via its obligations under the Railways Act if any franchise were to fail financially and become unable to operate its services. The EMAs include explicit provisions to prevent 'double recovery', ensuring franchisees cannot be compensated through the EMAs where funding from other government support schemes has been obtained.

■ Railways: Waste Disposal**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[68769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which rail franchises have temporary non-compliance status from Network Rail and run rolling stock that dumps human waste and effluent on railway tracks in England and Wales.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The following franchised train operators have applied for, and been granted, temporary non-compliance status: Chiltern, CrossCountry, East Midlands Railway, Great Western Railway, Greater Anglia, Northern, West Midlands Trains and Transport for Wales.

Other operators, such as charter and heritage, for which the Department is not responsible for have also been issued with non-compliance status by Network Rail.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[68770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which railway routes on the England and Wales rail network have temporary non-compliance status from Network Rail and allow the practice of dumping human waste and effluent on railway tracks.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Non-compliance status is granted to operators and not routes.

The following franchised train operators have applied for, and been granted, temporary non-compliance status: Chiltern, CrossCountry, East Midlands Railway, Great Western Railway, Greater Anglia, Northern, West Midlands Trains and Transport for Wales.

Other operators, such as charter and heritage, for which the Department is not responsible for have also been issued with non-compliance status by Network Rail.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[68771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what risk assessment his Department has made of the effect on railway workers from human waste and effluent on tracks in England and Wales during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have been clear that our priority remains the safety of staff and passengers.

We have issued comprehensive guidance to employers on the steps they should take to make their workplaces Covid-secure, which outlines measures to assess and address the risks of coronavirus in the transport sector across England.

Operators have been instructed to undertake Covid-19 staff-safety risk assessments to determine how best to maintain the health of staff through safe distancing and provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate. All guidance documents are available on the government website at:

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

Roads: Greater Manchester**Andrew Gwynne:****[68675]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of transferring responsibility for the strategic highway network to Transport for Greater Manchester to ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the management of the network across the city-region.

Rachel Maclean:

The second Road Investment Strategy, published in March, commissioned Highways England to carry out a study into the role of the strategic road network in urban areas. This study will consider the merits of changes in road ownership as well as other options to improve coordination of urban road networks such as that in Greater Manchester.

Transport: Infrastructure**Jim Shannon:****[66863]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on equitable investment in major infrastructure projects.

Rachel Maclean:

DfT Ministers regularly discuss matters of mutual concern with their counterparts in the Devolved Administrations, including investment in transport infrastructure.

Walking: Children**Jim Shannon:****[66865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Education to promote walk to school days.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In England, the Department for Transport is making £225 million available to local authorities this financial year for urgent measures to make it easier for people to walk and cycle for all short journeys, including to school. This in addition to providing £1m

for the Walk to School outreach programme delivered by Living Streets. The Department for Education has produced guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings. This guidance sets out that schools should 'ensure parents and young people are aware of recommendations on transport to and from education or childcare settings' and encourage parents and children and young people 'to walk or cycle to their education setting where possible'. Any funding on top of the Department for Transport's current budgets will have Barnett Consequentials applied in the usual way for Northern Ireland.

TREASURY

■ Business: Government Assistance

Sarah Olney:

[\[68754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he make it his policy to add environmental conditions to bailouts for businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

As laid out in the Summer Economic Update, as part of its normal operations the government has always considered providing support to strategically important companies that can reasonably be expected to have a long-term viable future, and whose failure or distress could cause disproportionate harm to the UK economy or society. Companies must have exhausted all other options before being considered, and any support given is on terms that protect the taxpayer, with existing lenders and shareholders expected to contribute to and share in the financial burden. Companies receiving support also need to agree to appropriate conditions, including those relating to tax, supplier payment terms, climate change and corporate governance.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[68444\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he is putting in place to ensure that people who have worked for an employer for more than one year but are paid an annual salary and whose employer submitted an RTI for tax year 2019-20 after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme cut-off date receive support from that scheme.

Jesse Norman:

For an employee to be eligible for the CJRS they must have been notified to HMRC on a real-time information (RTI) submission on or before 19 March. Those paid annually are eligible to claim, as long as they meet the relevant conditions including being notified to HMRC on an RTI submission on or before 19 March 2020, which relates to a payment of earnings in the 2019/2020 tax year. Anyone paid annually and notified on an RTI submission after that date will not be eligible for the scheme, which puts them in the same position as those who are paid more frequently and were not notified to HMRC on or before 19 March.

The 19 March cut-off date allows as many people as possible to be included while managing the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

Huw Merriman:

[\[68728\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to clauses 2.1 and 2.2 of the amendments to the Treasury Direction to the Jobs Retention Scheme, published on 25 June 2020, whether employers are prohibited from using grants from the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme for employees placed on redundancy notice periods; and whether those grants must be repaid by employers if used during this period.

Jesse Norman:

The CJRS is designed to protect jobs and to keep people in employment. Where employers must make redundancies, they should do so in accordance with the normal rules and with contractual obligations. This includes giving a notice period and consulting staff before a final decision is reached.

Employers may continue to claim under the scheme for a furloughed employee who is serving a statutory notice period subject to eligibility based on contact of employment.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Leicester**

Alberto Costa:

[\[68372\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether businesses affected by the local lockdown in Leicester will be able to furlough new staff members.

Jesse Norman:

The lockdown in Leicester reverses the opening of non-essential retail shops and postpones the re-opening of hospitality businesses such as pubs and restaurants. The furlough scheme runs until October and employers are not required to contribute until August. Hence, affected businesses can continue to have access to the scheme throughout the local lockdown, as they have done so far.

To enable the introduction of flexible furloughing, and to support those already furloughed in getting back to work, claims from July onwards are restricted to employers who have used the scheme before and previously furloughed employees.

Closing the scheme to new entrants is necessary for a gradual closure of the scheme. The focus is now on bringing those currently furloughed back into productive employment.

■ **Disability: Coronavirus**

Sarah Olney:

[\[68401\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide additional financial support for disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has committed to an unprecedented package to support individuals through this difficult time. Individuals with disabilities will benefit from the comprehensive level of support to individuals provided during the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes, as well as the injection of an additional £8bn into the welfare system according to OBR estimates.

The Government's support package during the current pandemic sits alongside a substantial set of welfare support for disabled individuals. The Government will spend nearly £50 billion this year on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) remains the primary means of support to help with some of the extra cost of long-term ill-health or disability, and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for those who have a disability or health condition that may affect how much they can work.

The Government has implemented a range of measures to make access to disability benefits easier and to protect existing claimants during the current situation. This includes temporarily suspending face to face assessments.

■ Employee Benefit Trusts: Taxation**David Mundell:**[\[67579\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to exempt (a) the Roadchef Employee Benefits Trust and (b) all-employee share schemes from tax.

Jesse Norman:

The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs, who have indicated that they are in dialogue with the taxpayer. It would not be appropriate for Treasury ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

■ English Language: Education**Caroline Ansell:**[\[68738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether English Language Schools are eligible for business rate relief for the 2020-21 financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities on eligible properties. As set out in the guidance, support is targeted at premises that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; for

assembly and leisure; or as hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to determine eligibility for reliefs, having regard to guidance issued by the Government.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as language schools, has also been made available.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[66858\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on the public finances of the fair fuel stabiliser announced in 2011.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government has frozen fuel duty in every year from 2011 to reduce the impact of high fuel prices on households and businesses. Without the nine years of action taken by the government, pump prices would be 23p per litre higher than they are today.

However, freezing fuel duty comes at significant costs to the Exchequer. The Government has spent £67bn on freezing fuel duty and will spend another £46bn by the end of 2025. Future fuel duty rates will be considered alongside measures that are needed to help meet the UK's net zero commitment.

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[\[68751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the effect on local government finances of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has provided over £3.7bn in additional grant funding to Councils in England to help them respond to pressures across all their services as a result of Covid-19. The Government has also announced a major new scheme to reimburse councils for their income losses during the pandemic, and is allowing councils to spread their tax deficits over three years rather than the usual one. These measures represent a comprehensive package of support for councils as they respond to Covid-19.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[68679\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on the fundamental review of business rates.

Sarah Olney:

[\[68752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on the fundamental review of business rates.

Jesse Norman:

On 28 April, HM Treasury set out timelines for tax policy consultations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As set out in that update, the call for evidence for the fundamental review of business rates will be published in the coming months. Stakeholders will be invited to contribute their views and engage throughout the review.

Revenue and Customs: Telephone Services**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[67789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the revenue raised by HMRC via public telephone calls to that Department (a) was from 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020 and (b) has been during the covid-19 outbreak period to date; and how that revenue has been spent.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC do not receive any income from the use of 0300 numbers.

Charlotte Nichols:[\[67809\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many cases of fraudulent phone calls purporting to come from HMRC have been reported in each of the last three years; how many of those calls led to (a) arrests and (b) convictions; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

In the last three years, HMRC have received the following volume of reports of fraudulent telephone calls purporting to come from HMRC:

April 2017 to March 2018: 7,788

April 2018 to March 2019: 104,774

April 2019 to March 2020: 203,362

HMRC operate a dedicated Customer Protection team to prevent, detect and respond to frauds abusing the HMRC brand.

While HMRC do not hold data on the number of arrests and convictions for those conducting HMRC related telephone frauds, recent activity such as arrests in London, Dorset and Leicester in April 2020 of an individual accused of sending fraudulent HMRC emails and texts, the May 2020 arrest and guilty plea of a 20 year old in Camden (awaiting sentencing) who admitted sending HMRC branded scams, and the sentencing of a Bulgarian national for 9 years following extradition to the UK for a £41.6m fraud abusing the HMRC brand demonstrate HMRC and UK law enforcement's determined pursuit of those defrauding the public.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Driving Instruction**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[67634\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether driving instructors will remain eligible for the second grant under the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme if (a) they choose

not to return to providing lessons on 4 July as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased and (b) if their business is significantly lower than before the covid-19 lockdown.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) helps those adversely affected by COVID-19. Eligible self-employed driving instructors, and others whose businesses are adversely affected by COVID-19 on or after 14 July will be able to claim a second and final SEISS grant when the scheme reopens for applications in August.

A business would be adversely affected if its income is significantly lower because of COVID-19.

More information about when a business would be adversely affected can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

and further examples can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-different-circumstances-affect-the-self-employment-income-support-scheme#adversely-affected-examples>.

■ **Soft Drinks: Taxation**

Harriett Baldwin:

[66857]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on public finances of the soft drinks industry levy.

Kemi Badenoch:

In the 2018-19 fiscal year, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) raised £240 million.

Further data on the effect of the SDIL on the public finances can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/soft-drinks-industry-levy-statistics>

Forecasts of future receipts are produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility on a regular basis as part of their Economic and Fiscal Outlook series. These are available on their website.

■ **Travel: Insurance**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[68743]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that holiday insurance companies do not insist that claimants first file for a chargeback claim before they pay out on claims; and what discussions he has had with representatives from the Financial Conduct Authority and (b) Competition and Markets Authority on that matter.

John Glen:

Travel insurance typically applies only for losses that cannot be recovered from elsewhere. Customers should therefore first contact travel providers or accommodation providers for reimbursement. In the next instance, credit card providers would provide a refund under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974

if the payment was made by credit card and cost was over £100 per unit. However, travel insurance policies differ so customers should check the terms and conditions of their policy or speak to their insurer.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has published guidance for firms handling consumer claims during the Covid-19 crisis. Where consumers have two potentially valid avenues of redress against regulated firms (for example, from an insurer and credit provider) there is nothing in their rules that stops an insurer, credit provider or other regulated firm settling the claim in full (so long as there is no disadvantage to the consumer in this) and, where appropriate, seeking to claim back from the other firm involved.

The FCA will be consulting in the coming weeks on guidelines so that in future their expectations of firms and the choices for consumers will be clearer. More broadly, the FCA has said that, in light of COVID-19, insurers must consider very carefully the needs of their customers and show flexibility in their treatment of them.

■ Treasury: Coronavirus

John McDonnell:

[\[66808\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Procurement Policy Note 04/20: Recovery and Transition from COVID-19, published on 9 June 2020, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of maintaining the provision of contractual relief as a result of covid-19 in line with Procurement Policy Notice 02/20; which (a) companies and (b) work areas will be affected by changes to that contractual relief; and what the timeframe is for proposals to change that contractual relief.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury is working collaboratively with its suppliers using the procurement policy guidance so that contracts continue to remain relevant and sustainable and deliver value for money.

■ UK Trade with EU: VAT

Catherine West:

[\[68745\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether VAT will be charged on the value of goods imported in parcels into the UK from the EU using (a) Parcelforce and (b) other fast parcel services from January 2020.

Jesse Norman:

At Spring Budget 2020 the Government announced that it would consult informally with stakeholders to explore options on the VAT treatment of imported goods. This includes consideration of direct imports and goods located in the UK at the time of sale.

■ Virgin Atlantic Airways

John McNally: [67685]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Virgin Atlantic is eligible to apply to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for support with staff redundancy payments.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to protecting as many jobs as possible and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is one of the ways it is doing so.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grants cannot be used to substitute redundancy payments.

Comprehensive guidance on eligibility for and the purpose of the scheme can be found on the GOV.UK Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme page:

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

■ Wholesale Trade: Non-domestic Rates

John McNally: [67684]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the economic benefits of extending business rates relief to wholesalers.

Carolyn Harris: [68387]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost of extending business rates relief to food and drink wholesalers.

Jesse Norman:

Business rates are devolved in Scotland, and so are a matter for the Scottish Government.

In England, the Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities on eligible properties. As set out in the guidance, support is targeted at premises that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; for assembly and leisure; or as hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to determine eligibility for reliefs, having regard to guidance issued by the Government.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as wholesalers, has also been made available.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Child Maintenance Service: Scotland****Marion Fellows:**[\[68724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much is owed in outstanding arrears under the child maintenance service in (a) Motherwell and Wishaw constituency, (b) North Lanarkshire, and (c) Scotland.

Mims Davies:

As of the end of March 2020, across the whole of Great Britain, a total of £3.6 billion maintenance has been arranged through the Child Maintenance Service since its inception in 2012.

The total amount of arrears for Child Maintenance Service in Motherwell and Wishaw constituency, North Lanarkshire and Scotland in March 2020 are given in the following table:

Total amount of arrears for Child Maintenance Service, March 2020

	TOTAL ARREARS (£)
Scotland	24,019,000
North Lanarkshire	1,752,000
Motherwell and Wishaw	460,000

Source : Child Maintenance Group administrative data

Notes:

1. These figures do not include cases in which historical child maintenance arrears, originally arranged by the Child Support Agency, have been transferred to the CMS for collection.
1. The figures have been rounded to the nearest £1000.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**Neil Gray:**[\[66872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has (a) undertaken and (b) commissioned research into the adverse effects of social security sanctions on a claimant's mental health.

Mims Davies:

No research has been undertaken or commissioned by the Department to see whether there is any potential link between the sanctions regime on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals.

We engage at a personal and individual level with all of our claimants and are committed to tailoring support for specific individual needs, including agreeing realistic and structured steps to encourage claimants into or towards the labour market. These conditionality requirements are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate for the claimant. This would include tailoring to reflect any mental health issues the claimant raised.

When considering whether a sanction is appropriate, a Decision Maker will take all the claimant's individual circumstances, including any health conditions or disabilities and any evidence of good reason, into account before deciding whether a sanction is warranted.

■ Universal Credit

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[68777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government has plans to reform the benefit cap system in relation to claimants of universal credit.

Mims Davies:

The Secretary of State has a statutory obligation to review the levels of the benefit cap at least once in each Parliament unless an early election is called, as it was last year. A review will take place at an appropriate point in the future.

■ Universal Credit: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese: [\[68776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the benefit cap is applied to claimants of universal credit who have had their working hours reduced as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

The Benefit Cap restores fairness between those receiving out-of-work benefits and taxpayers.

On Universal Credit claimants in work have the certainty that each month payments adjust reflecting earnings and household circumstances.

Claimants may also benefit from a nine-month grace period where their benefit will not be capped if they have a sustained work history with monthly earnings of at least £604 (£569 up to March 2020) in each of the previous 12 months. These earnings can include statutory sick pay, employer sick pay, earnings from self-employment as well as payments from the furlough scheme.

Claimants can also approach their Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need additional help to meet rental costs.

■ **Universal Credit: Telephone Services**

Kate Osamor:

[42141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is for claimants calling the universal credit helpline.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 12 May 2020]: The average waiting times change week on week and is demand led.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Publication of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (Cumberlege Review)**

Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Ms Nadine Dorries): [\[HCWS347\]](#)

I am today informing the House of the publication of the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, chaired by Baroness Cumberlege.

I would like to thank Baroness Cumberlege for her dedication to listening to the experiences of patients and their families. She has acted with compassion and thoroughness and gone to great lengths to ensure that those who have felt unheard have had a voice. She has also been diligent in looking across the system at possible improvements.

The Government also thanks those very same patients and their families who have contributed their time and energy to the Review. We know that in some cases it has been a physical and psychological challenge to attend the meetings that the review set up.

The Review was commissioned by the Government in February 2018 and its terms of reference required it to explore how the health system responds when patients and their families raise concerns about the safety of treatments.

While the Review has progressed, the Government and the NHS has already taken a number of steps that are relevant to the issues the Review raises. However, there is always more we can do more to make the NHS systems more responsive to peoples' concerns when they are first raised.

It is imperative for the sake of patients that we now give the recommendations from this independent review the full consideration they deserve.

I can assure you that patient safety remains a key priority for the government and we are committed to the NHS being the safest healthcare system in the world.

I will give an Oral Statement in Parliament.

A copy of the report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Park Homes**

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing (Luke Hall): [\[HCWS348\]](#)

I am today publishing the Government response to our consultation "Mobile Homes – a fit and proper person test for park home sites". I am placing copies of the response in the libraries of the House, and it will also be available on gov.uk.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving protections for park home residents, the Government undertook a two-part review of park homes legislation in 2017. In the response published on 22 October 2018, we committed to introduce the fit and proper person test, subject to a technical consultation. This consultation was undertaken between 25 July and 17 September 2019 and received 370 responses, the majority of which were highly supportive.

The purpose of the test is to improve the management of park home and other residential caravan sites. By introducing an assessment that the person responsible for managing the site is suitable to do so and of good character, this will help target and remove the worst offenders from the sector. The test will be an important tool for Local Authority enforcement and marks an important milestone in my department's work to protect residents of park homes and other residential caravan sites, who are often elderly and vulnerable, from unscrupulous site owners.

I am today laying the required regulations bringing the test into effect. They will mandate that:

- each local authority must set up and maintain a register of people who are fit and proper to manage a park home site in their area. A site owner, or an appointed manager, must appear on the local authority register in order to manage a site;
- when an applicant applies for registration, a local authority must consider, among other details, the applicant's criminal record and details of all sites in which the applicant has an equitable interest; and
- if convicted of any offences under the Regulations the site owner would face an unlimited fine. Offences include operating a site without being on the local authority register, breaching the conditions attached to an entry on the register, and providing false information in an application.

The regulations will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure so will require the approval of both Houses.

The Government is dedicated to improving protections for park home residents and these regulations are an important step towards delivering on that commitment.