



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 July 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:20 P.M., 10 July 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	4	DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	10
ATTORNEY GENERAL	4		
■ Administration of Estates	4	■ 4G: Huawei	10
■ Sentencing: Appeals	4	■ Broadband: Wales	11
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	5	■ Charities: Coronavirus	12
■ Audit	5	■ Scouts and Guides: Coronavirus	12
■ Carbon Emissions	6	■ Temporary Accommodation: Coronavirus	13
■ Construction: Contracts	6	EDUCATION	13
■ Employment: Disability	7	■ Children: Coronavirus	13
■ Energy: Conservation	7	■ Children: ICT and Internet	16
■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus	8	■ Education: Coronavirus	16
■ Trade Credit Reinsurance Scheme	8	■ Education: Staff	18
■ Warm Home Discount Scheme	8	■ Foster Care	18
CABINET OFFICE	9	■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes	19
■ Coronavirus: Marriage	9	■ Health Professions: Training	19
■ Females: Employment	9	■ Holiday Play Schemes: Free School Meals	20
■ Government Departments	9	■ Schools: Coronavirus	21
DEFENCE	10	■ Schools: Period Poverty	22
■ European Fighter Aircraft: Radar	10	■ Social Services: Coronavirus	22
■ Submarines: Staff	10	■ Teachers: Holiday Leave	23
		■ Universities: Coronavirus	23
		■ Universities: Staff	24

■ Vocational Education: Young People	25	■ Coronavirus: Aviation	35
■ Young People: Unemployment	26	■ Hepatitis	36
ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	26	HOME OFFICE	36
■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers	26	■ Domestic Abuse: Pets	36
■ Beekeeping: Equipment	27	■ Licensed Premises	37
■ Beverage Containers: Recycling	27	■ Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation	37
■ Cats: Coronavirus	28	■ Prostitution: Criminal Records	37
■ Fish: Exports	28	■ Travellers: Caravan Sites	38
■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software	29	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	38
■ Fishing Vessels: Inspections	29	■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus	38
■ Peat Bogs: Fires	29	■ Local Government: Reorganisation	39
■ Poultry Meat: Imports	30	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	39
■ Recycling: Greater London	31	■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-pacific Partnership	39
■ Seafood: Coronavirus	31	TRANSPORT	40
■ Shopping: Disability	32	■ Aviation and Package Holidays: Coronavirus	40
■ Water Supply	32	■ Cycling: Greater Manchester	41
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	33	■ M67: Bridges	41
■ China: Uighurs	33	■ Railways: Coronavirus	41
■ Democracy and Human Rights	33	■ Railways: Fares	42
■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Energy	33	■ Railways: Franchises	43
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	33	■ Railways: North West	43
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Overseas Aid	34	■ River Thames: Boats	43
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff	34	■ Roads: Greater Manchester	44
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	35	TREASURY	44
■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software	35	■ Aerospace Industry: Coronavirus	44
		■ Beer: Excise Duties	45
		■ Business: Coronavirus	45

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus	46	■ Inland Waterways: Coronavirus	48
■ Economic Situation: Yorkshire and the Humber	46	■ Overseas Aid	48
■ Government Assistance: Wolverhampton South West	47	■ Social Security Benefits	49
■ Infrastructure: Carbon Emissions	47	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	49
		■ Hate Crime: LGBT People	49
		WORK AND PENSIONS	50
		■ Coronavirus: Staffordshire	50

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Administration of Estates

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[68760\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many estates of people who died without known entitled relatives and left a will were referred to the Bona Vacant Division of the Government Legal Department in (a) March, (b) April and (c) May in (i) 2019 and (ii) 2020.

Michael Ellis:

The Bona Vacantia Division (BVD) of the Government Legal Department (GLD) deals with the solvent estates of people domiciled in England & Wales who appear to have died **without** leaving a valid will or relatives entitled to share in their estates in priority to the Crown. It therefore does not generally deal with estates where there is a valid will.

If the referral contains information which suggests the deceased has left a valid will disposing of their entire estate, it will be returned to the person who referred it. The Division does not keep a record of these estates.

If the deceased does not appear to have left a valid will or entitled relatives, the estate will be advertised on the Division's website.

Occasionally the Division determines that the deceased has left a valid will which disposes of the entire estate after it has been advertised. There were two such estates referred in March 2019; two in April 2019; none in May 2019; one in March 2020; one in April 2020 and one in May 2020.

Estates where the deceased has left a valid will but it does not dispose of the entire estate are sometimes referred to the Division because the undisposed residue passes by intestacy to the Crown. One such estate was referred to the Division in March 2019 and one in April 2019. There have been no other referrals in the months concerned.

During the corresponding period, the number of estates referred to the Division where there was no will or no will has subsequently come to light were: March 2019 = 296; April 2019 = 187; May 2019 = 160; March 2020 = 192; April 2020 = 204; May 2020 = 81.

■ Sentencing: Appeals

Simon Baynes:

[\[68445\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many sentences have been extended under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme in each of the last six months.

Michael Ellis:

A total of 27 individual sentences have been increased by the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Scheme in the last six months: four sentences in January, eight in February, five in March, one in April, three in May and six in June.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY■ **Audit****Richard Fuller:**[\[67598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his timescale is for responding to the Statutory audit services: initial consultation on the Competition and Markets Authority recommendations which closed in September 2019.

Paul Scully:

The Government has analysed the responses to the 2019 consultation and we intend to set out our response to the consultation alongside comprehensive proposals in the coming months, seeking views on them where the Government has not already done so.

Richard Fuller:[\[67599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to implement the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) proposed reforms to the statutory audit market published on 18 April 2019.

Paul Scully:

The Government supports effective and proportionate action to address key issues in the audit market, including the lack of competition and resilience, misaligned incentives, and a lack of public trust.

The Government has analysed the responses to the 2019 Government consultation on the CMA's study and we intend to set out our comprehensive proposals in response to that consultation in the coming months, seeking views on them where the Government have not already done so. We will then consider bringing forward legislation in due course.

Richard Fuller:[\[67600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to reform of the statutory audit market in the current session of Parliament.

Paul Scully:

The Competition and Markets Authority study of the statutory audit market made a series of far-reaching and ambitious recommendations. Our intention is to set out our comprehensive proposals in the coming months, seeking views on them where the Government has not already done so. We will then consider bringing forward legislation in due course.

■ Carbon Emissions

Danny Kruger: [\[67828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason the Government has decided not to implement a carbon fee dividends scheme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

A carbon fee and dividend is an alternative form of carbon pricing policy. The UK already prices carbon through, for example, our participation in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS).

UK Government is establishing a UK Emissions Trading System, with increased ambition on carbon pricing. The new system will ensure a smooth transition for businesses as the UK is set to leave EU system after the Transition Period at the end of the year, while also allowing us to have autonomy over its design and governance. Further detail can be found in The UK Government's and Devolved Administrations' full response to the public Consultation on the Future of UK carbon pricing, published on 1 June.

■ Construction: Contracts

Owen Thompson: [\[67694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans for the Construction Leadership Council to produce advice on JCT and NEC contracts and include them as part of the industry recovery plan.

Owen Thompson: [\[67695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has carried out on the potential effect of the use JCT and NEC contracts on the construction industry's post-covid-19 recovery.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 7 May, the Government issued guidance on responsible contractual behaviours, which was then updated on 30 June. This guidance applies to all organisations in the public and private sectors that operate under any form of contract, including the New Engineering Contract (NEC) and Joint Contracts Tribunal contracts, which are used in relation to construction projects. The guidance urges all parties to contracts to work collaboratively to avoid disputes, or if this is not possible, to seek to resolve these as quickly and cost-efficiently as possible. This guidance has been endorsed by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) and forms the basis of further advice on contractual issues provided to small businesses.

The Government welcomes the recovery plan produced by the CLC's Coronavirus Task Force, which sets out a plan to ensure that all parts of the sector can increase activity, work safely, and maximise their contribution to our economic recovery. We will continue to work with the Task Force, which includes firms, business representative organisations, and representatives of the professional institutions, to support the recovery of the construction sector.

■ Employment: Disability

Sarah Olney:

[\[68399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to provide additional support for disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak by enabling disabled people to work flexibly.

Paul Scully:

The Government is fully committed to supporting disabled people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, including making sure they can continue to work. The Government continues to support disabled employees to access assistive technology and other forms of support they need to remain in work. For example, **Access to Work** is continuing to provide support for people with a disability or health condition whether they are working in the workplace or are working from home.

Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers including making reasonable adjustments to support disabled workers to be able to work.

Currently the Government advice is that people should be working from home where it is possible to do so. Existing employment law gives employees the right to request flexible working, which includes remote working.

■ Energy: Conservation

Afzal Khan:

[\[67753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure the energy regulatory framework supports (a) Greater Manchester's 2038 carbon-neutral target and (b) distribution network operators' net zero innovation plans; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on consumers' (i) willingness and (ii) ability to pay for energy efficiency improvements through their energy bills.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Local Energy Programme launched in 2017 is supporting Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the clean energy economy. BEIS has allocated £500k directly to Greater Manchester Combined Authority since 2017 to develop innovative business models (for decarbonisation) and public sector leadership (for climate change and zero carbon targets) in support of their 2038 target, which are then shared with other Local Authorities. We are currently working with Greater Manchester Combined Authority on innovative technologies and local energy market approaches to accelerate Manchester's progress towards net-zero.

The regulatory price control for Distribution Network Operators is by law a matter for Ofgem, the independent energy regulator. BEIS is working with Ofgem to ensure that Net Zero innovation and new technologies can assist network operators to meet increased consumer demand for low carbon energy sources.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus**Sajid Javid:** [\[67615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2020 to Question 53392 on Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus, what discussions he has had with representatives from (a) business and (b) consumer advocacy organisations to assess the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on businesses that provide support for weddings.

Paul Scully:

My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister has announced that wedding ceremonies of up to 30 people can resume from 4 July. The Government is continuing to engage with representatives from the industry to explore how wedding celebrations may be resumed in a Covid-secure way, once it is safe to do so.

■ Trade Credit Reinsurance Scheme**Carolyn Harris:** [\[68386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Government's trade credit reinsurance scheme will be ratified by the EU; and what steps the Government is taking to expedite that process.

Paul Scully:

The Government's Trade Credit Reinsurance scheme, which has been agreed following extensive discussions with the insurance sector, will see the majority of Trade Credit Insurance coverage maintained for businesses across the UK.

This scheme is subject to State aid approval from the European Commission. We are working closely with the Commission to address any outstanding concerns. Once approval is secured we will swiftly be able to put contractual arrangements in place with insurers.

■ Warm Home Discount Scheme**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[67591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to (a) continue and (b) extend the scope of the Warm Home Discount scheme, after the current scheme finishes at the end of March 2021.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We will consult on a one-year extension of the current Warm Home Discount scheme later this year. We will also consider reform to improve the fuel poverty targeting of the scheme beyond 2022, and will consult on this in due course.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Coronavirus: Marriage****Daniel Kawczynski:****[68301]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether weddings with one hundred or more guests are likely to be allowed before the end of the year as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has been working closely with stakeholders in the wedding industry, the Places of Worship Taskforce, and the National Panel for Registration to enable small marriages and civil partnerships to begin safely from 4 July 2020. Guidance can be found at the link below, which remains under review and may be updated in line with the changing situation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

Large gatherings, for example of one hundred or more people, present greater risks of transmission. The Government continues to work with relevant stakeholders to consider how to enable receptions and larger marriage and civil partnership ceremonies to take place safely.

■ Females: Employment**Jessica Morden:****[69755]**

To ask the the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many women born between 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1960 there are in the UK; and how many of those women are in employment.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Response [PQ69755.pdf]

■ Government Departments**James Wild:****[68439]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Supreme Court ruling in R v Adams (Appellant) (Northern Ireland) UKSC 2018/0104 on the Carltona principle set out in the Cabinet Manual.

James Wild:**[68440]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to give statutory effect to the Carltona principle.

Chloe Smith:

The Carltona principle is fundamental to the functioning of Government. We are considering the judgment of the Court carefully.

DEFENCE■ **European Fighter Aircraft: Radar****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[67563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on fitting the AESA radar to the UK Typhoon fleet.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is committed to implementing an Active Electronically Scanned Array radar on our Typhoon fleet. The demonstration and manufacture phase for the UK's variant of the European Common Radar System is continuing at pace, and in June 2020 a contract was let with our European partners to develop a common integration solution across the Typhoon radar enterprise.

■ **Submarines: Staff****Anthony Mangnall:**[\[69706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will bring back charge pay for Submarine Watch Leaders to help improve retention of those personnel.

Johnny Mercer:

Recruitment and Retention Pay (Submariner) Level 5, which is sometimes referred to as 'charge pay', is currently paid to suitably qualified officers who meet the qualifying criteria.

The eligibility criteria for the allowance are periodically reviewed and will be part of the Submariner remuneration review which is next planned to be undertaken in 2024.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **4G: Huawei****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[69469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an estimate of the cost of removing Huawei components from the UK's 4G infrastructure network.

Matt Warman:

As part of its UK Telecoms Supply Chain Review, the Government set out its position on the stringent restrictions that should be applied to the presence of high risk vendors in the UK telecoms networks in January 2020.

The Review focused on 5G and full fibre networks. We have not estimated the specific costs associated with the removal of equipment from high risk vendors in the UK's 4G mobile networks. Cost estimates produced for the review represented the aggregated view across all mobile technologies (2G,3G,4G,5G).

■ Broadband: Wales

Ben Lake:

[\[68772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether local authorities in Wales are eligible to become strategic partners with the Government for the purposes of identifying public sector buildings to be included in the Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme.

Matt Warman:

Building Digital UK (BDUK) continues to extend opportunities to Local Authorities across the UK, including Wales, to become strategic partners by sharing their public sector buildings for possible inclusion within the Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programme, which runs until March 2021.

BDUK welcomes dialogue with Local Authorities on digital connectivity, and also encourages them to work closely with neighbouring Authorities to collectively identify hub sites that may be eligible for programme inclusion.

BDUK is already in dialogue with Welsh Government on a proposal to upgrade ~110 public sector sites, which will act as hub sites. Welsh Government is overseeing the development of the proposal for a project that involves Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, and Swansea.

Should other Local Authorities in Wales be interested in participating in the programme, they can express their interest by completing a Hub Site Submission sheet which is available at this address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rgc-programme-key-information>. Once complete, this should be sent to rgc@dcms.gov.uk.

Although the completion of a Submission sheet is not a guaranteed commitment that BDUK will invest in that particular area, it is a mandatory part of the selection process. If a completed sheet looks to be in alignment with the aims and objectives of the RGC programme, BDUK will contact the Local Authority.

BDUK also has Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) projects underway in Wales, which are upgrading public buildings in North Wales, Cardiff City Region and Pembrokeshire. We are also jointly funding, with Welsh Government, the deployment of a fibre optic backbone along the South Wales Motorway and Trunk Road network between Newport and Pembrokeshire.

■ Charities: Coronavirus**Simon Baynes:****[68446]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what fiscal steps he is taking to support the charity sector in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS is continuing to work closely with the civil society sector to assess the needs of the sector and how the government can best support it to continue its vital work. The Government has committed a £750m targeted funding package to support the Voluntary and Community Sector, which builds on the significant package of support available across sectors, including the Job Retention Scheme. A further £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts has been unlocked to support urgent work tackling youth unemployment, providing emergency loans for civil society organisations and improving the availability of fair, affordable credit to people in vulnerable circumstances.

Ensuring charities can begin fundraising activities will be a crucial part of the sector's recovery. DCMS has published a collection of guidance for DCMS sectors relating to COVID-19. This includes practical guidance and resources from the Fundraising Regulator and Chartered Institute of Fundraising supporting charities to safeguard the public, staff and volunteers as they plan to return to fundraising activities in a safe and responsible way. This can be viewed at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-dcms-sectors-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

■ Scouts and Guides: Coronavirus**Tracey Crouch:****[68319]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits to children's mental health of allowing UK scouting to recommence as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Government recognises the unprecedented impact which Covid-19 has had on young people, particularly on their mental health.

We recognise the impact Uniformed Youth groups like the Scouts have on the wellbeing of young people, helping them to develop life skills and be a part of their communities.

Youth centres and Uniformed Youth groups are able to re-open from 4th July, and DCMS has supported the National Youth Agency to produce guidance for youth organisations on operating safely during Covid-19.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Coronavirus

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[68761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has allocated funding to (a) hotel and (b) bed and breakfast owners to cover (i) costs incurred and (ii) loss of income as a result of an extended stay by a guest testing positive for covid-19 and being unable to return home.

Nigel Huddleston:

We have published guidance on how to open guest accommodation businesses safely whilst minimising the risks of COVID-19.

If a guest is displaying signs of COVID-19 while staying in overnight accommodation, they should inform the accommodation provider, immediately self-isolate where they are to minimise any risk of transmission, and request a test. If they are confirmed to have COVID-19, they should return home if they reasonably can. If a guest cannot reasonably return home, their circumstances should be discussed with an appropriate health care professional and, if necessary, the local authority.

Unless otherwise provided for in the contractual terms of the booking, the guest will be expected to pay the costs of an extended stay in all but exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to, where the accommodation provider has failed to follow government guidance to create a COVID-secure environment.

The Government has developed a comprehensive support package to help businesses and workers deal with various COVID-related pressures, which hotel and bed and breakfast businesses can continue to access.

EDUCATION

■ Children: Coronavirus

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[67555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential long-term effects of the covid-19 lockdown of the social development of children between the ages of 0 and eighteen.

Vicky Ford:

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

We have been working closely with partners to provide resources and to update guidance to support and promote children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes signposting to resources on

supporting and promoting mental wellbeing among the list of resources to help children to learn at home, which are available here:

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

The return to school is a key part of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. In addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity, attendance at school allows for social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return. The department has now published detailed plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education from September. The guidance for schools is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

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

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

All NHS mental health trusts have been asked to ensure that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. Public Health England and Health Education England have also developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

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

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

Rachael Maskell:

[68374]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding he plans to allocate to support children who have suffered trauma during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachael Maskell:

[68375]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much additional funding he plans to allocate to supporting children's mental wellbeing when pupils return to school during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The return to school is a vital factor in supporting the mental wellbeing of pupils. We have encouraged schools to focus on pastoral support as more pupils return to school this term. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are now able to return to primary school, and Year 10 and Year 12 pupils are able to receive face-to-face support at secondary school. Primary schools with capacity can bring back additional groups, in line with existing protective measures. We have also given schools the flexibility to have face-to-face 'check-ups' with all pupils during the summer term.

The department has now published detailed plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education from September. The guidance highlights the particular need to focus on pastoral support and mental wellbeing as a central part of what schools provide, in order to re-engage them and rebuild social interaction with their friends and teachers. This will involve curriculum provision as well as extra-curricular and pastoral support, and our recently published relationships, sex and health education training module will support teachers with preparation to deliver content on mental health and wellbeing. The guidance for schools is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-and-colleges-to-reopen-in-full-in-september>.

To support the return to school, the government has announced a £650 million 'catch up' premium, as part of our wider £1 billion Covid catch-up package, to be shared across state-funded schools over the 2020-21 academic year. School leaders will have the discretion on how to use this funding to best support their pupils to catch up for lost time, which in some cases will include support to parents, carers and children to help them re-engage with learning.

Access to mental health support is more important than every during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS services remain open, and leading mental health charities are being supported to deliver additional services through the £5 million Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. During Mental Health Awareness Week, the government also announced that a further £4.2 million will be awarded to mental health charities, including the Samaritans, Young Minds and Bipolar UK. All NHS mental health trusts have been asked to ensure that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. Public Health England and Health Education England have also developed advice and guidance for parents and professionals on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

In addition, the Government has provided funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to support them to offer free confidential support to children and young

people. This can be accessed anytime either by texting SHOUT to 85258, or by calling Childline on 0800 1111 or The Mix on 0808 808 4994. Children and young people can also find online information on COVID-19 and mental health on the Young Minds website, which is available at: <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>.

■ Children: ICT and Internet

Siobhain McDonagh:

[62276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of internet providers on (a) providing internet access and (b) adequate devices for disadvantaged children who are out of school.

Nick Gibb:

The Government wants to do everything it can to support schools and families to continue children's education while they are at home.

We have committed over £100 million to support remote education. We are making laptops and tablets available to disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have access and are preparing for examinations in year 10, and to those receiving support from a social worker, including pre-school children, and care leavers.

Where care leavers, children with a social worker at secondary school and disadvantaged children in Year 10 do not have internet connections, we will be providing 4G wireless routers to them so that they can learn at home.

In May, the Department invited local authorities to order devices for the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers. In June, the Department started inviting academy trusts and local authorities to order their devices for disadvantaged year 10 pupils. The Department has published information about how many laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers we have delivered or dispatched to local authorities and academy trusts as of 30 June, which can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laptops-tablets-and-4g-wireless-routers-progress-data>.

The Department is working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families. For families who rely on a mobile internet connection, mobile network operators are working to provide access to free additional data while the COVID-19 outbreak requires children to learn from home and more social care services are online. In partnership with BT, the Department is also providing disadvantaged children and young people with free access to BT Wi-Fi hotspots.

■ Education: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[68403]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled people have access to education in a safe environment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Bristow:

[\[68441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to local authorities on the return of SEND pupils to school.

Vicky Ford:

Supporting all children and young people and keeping them safe is the highest priority for the government, especially at this time. That is why, throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, educational settings have been asked to ensure that children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans can continue to attend where appropriate and, following a risk assessment, where their needs can be safely met in the educational environment.

Returning to normal educational routines as quickly as possible will be critical for children and young people's education and wellbeing. From 1 June, we asked special educational settings to welcome back as many children and young people as could be safely catered for in their setting, based on their risk assessment as the primary deciding factor. In mainstream settings, we asked that children and young people with EHC plans in eligible year groups experience the same return to settings as their peers without EHC plans in the same year group, informed by their risk assessments. However, the prevalence of COVID-19 has decreased and the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of all children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disability (SEND), returning to their educational setting so that they can receive high-quality teaching and specialist professional care.

On 2 July, the government published detailed plans for schools and colleges that set out what is needed to plan for a full return of their pupils and students in September, including for special education settings. We have also updated the guidance for higher education providers on reopening university campuses.

The guidance has been developed with medical experts from Public Health England and we continue to work closely with the country's best scientific and medical experts to ensure that children, young people and staff are as safe as possible. The guidance provides specific advice on approaches for reducing the risk of transmission as well as other operational considerations for educational settings to follow as they prepare for welcoming back all pupils and students with SEND in both mainstream and specialist settings.

The guidance for special educational settings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

The guidance for mainstream settings is available here:

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

The guidance for further education settings is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining->

[further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term.](#)

The guidance for higher education settings is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

We will continue to work closely with special education settings, parents and carers, local authorities and other partner organisations ahead of September. For instance, we know that specific transport arrangements for children and young people with SEND will be critical. We will publish guidance for local authorities who provide dedicated school transport shortly.

■ Education: Staff

Dame Diana Johnson:

[68298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his oral statement of 12 May 2020 on the extension of the coronavirus job retention scheme, whether term-time workers in education are eligible for furlough during July and August.

Nick Gibb:

State funded schools have continued to receive their budgets as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. That will ensure that they are able to continue to pay their staff, and meet their other regular financial commitments, as we move through these extraordinary times.

As public funds continue to be paid, HMRC's guidance for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>) states that public bodies, including schools, should not furlough staff via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if their wages are paid from public funds.

Staff in schools whose wages are not paid from public funds, and whose employer has already furloughed, may continue to be furloughed via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, subject to criteria set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care#state-funded-schools>.

■ Foster Care

Tulip Siddiq:

[67715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been placed in fostering for adoption placement under section 22C(9B)(c) of the Children Act 1989 without the approval of a nominated officer since The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24 April 2020; and how many of those children were aged a) under 12 months, (b) 1-4 years, (c) 5-9 years, (d) 10-15 years and (e) 16 years and over.

Vicky Ford:

The information is not available in the form requested. The department is engaging with a range of stakeholders, including monthly calls with local authorities, to seek information on how the Adoption and Children (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 are being used. This process will inform my statement to Parliament on the Regulations before summer recess. The Regulations should only be used when absolutely necessary, and ongoing analysis indicates that they are being used infrequently.

Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[68394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to expand the number of retailers included in the Covid Summer Food Fund voucher scheme.

Vicky Ford:

Provision for free school meals is ordinarily term-time only. However, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, the government understands that children and parents face an entirely unprecedented situation over the summer. To reflect this, we will be providing additional funding for a COVID Summer Food Fund that will enable families with children who are eligible for free school meals to receive food vouchers covering the six-week holiday period. This is a specific measure to reflect the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak. Our guidance on the COVID Summer Food Fund is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-summer-food-fund>.

The vouchers can be spent in a variety of supermarkets that have e-gift card arrangements in place with our supplier, Edenred, including Aldi, Asda, Company Shop Group, Iceland (including The Food Warehouse Stores), Marks & Spencer, McColl's, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose. We have been working with other supermarkets to encourage them to join. Any additional supermarkets would need to have the right infrastructure to deliver e-gift cards across their network of stores.

Where eligible families would be unable to access any of the supermarkets available through using Edenred e-gift cards, schools can make alternative voucher arrangements with a local supermarket that is not listed above. Schools can claim for this through the exceptional costs fund in the autumn, provided that schools have ordered their vouchers one week before their school term ends.

Health Professions: Training**Zarah Sultana:**[\[67792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of abolishing student-funded tuition fees for (a) nursing, (b) midwifery and (c) allied healthcare students from the academic year 2020-21.

Zarah Sultana:

[\[67793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current system of tuition fees and maintenance grants for (a) nursing, (b) midwifery and (c) allied healthcare students.

Michelle Donelan:

The current system for funding tuition fees for nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students has enabled us to open up the number of training places that universities can offer in these professions and to increase the amount of living costs support available.

From September 2020, eligible new and continuing nursing, midwifery and many allied health professional students on pre-registration courses at English universities will also receive an additional new non-repayable grant of £5,000 to contribute to their living costs. Funding up to a further £3,000 is also available for students who choose to study in an area or a specialism that is struggling to recruit students or for helping students with childcare costs. This funding is in addition to the support that students can already access through the student loans system and the existing learning support fund, which includes funding for childcare, travel and exceptional hardship.

The government has also recently announced that the maximum loan for living costs will be increased by 2.9% for the 2020/21 academic year. It will be up to £9,203 for eligible full-time undergraduate students living away from home and studying outside London (loan amounts are higher in London).

Maximum tuition fees for undergraduate courses, and the subsidised fee loans available from the government to pay them, will remain at £9,250 for a standard full-time undergraduate course in the 2020/21 academic year. This is the third year in succession maximum fees have been frozen.

Loans for tuition fees and living costs only need to be repaid from the statutory repayment date. For most undergraduate students, the statutory repayment date is the April after students finish their course. Monthly repayments are linked to income, not to interest rates or the amount borrowed. Repayments, which are calculated at 9%, are only on amounts earned over the repayment threshold, which is currently annually £26,575. Borrowers are protected, as their repayments decrease if their income decreases, with outstanding debt written off after 30 years.

■ **Holiday Play Schemes: Free School Meals**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[68373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will fully fund summer holiday club places for children on free school meals.

Vicky Ford:

On 22 June, we announced 17 local authority areas that will benefit from our Holiday Activities and Food programme this summer, providing thousands of disadvantaged

children with access to healthy meals and enriching activities. Grant funding was allocated based on a competitive bidding process.

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

We have also recently announced a £1 billion COVID 'catch-up' package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time. £650 million will be shared across state primary, secondary and special schools over the 2020-2021 academic year. Schools are best placed to decide how this money is spent, but that can include, where appropriate, funding places at summer schools.

We recognise that all young people have lost time in education because of the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of their income or background. Following the announcement from my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, confirming that holiday clubs will now be allowed to reopen during the summer holidays, we have published 2 pieces of guidance about community activities, holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school provision for children over the age of 5. The guidance is available here: <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> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[68377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what volume of hand sanitiser will be made available to each school from September 2020.

Nick Gibb:

Guidance for the full opening of schools

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>), published 2 July, includes advice on handwashing and use of hand sanitiser as part of a system of controls. Schools remain responsible for the products that they require and, as with other cleaning products, schools can access hand sanitiser through their existing supply chains. We are also recommending additional sourcing options which include using the Crown Commercial Service 'Safer Working Supplies' Portal (<https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/covid-19/covid-19-buyer-information/safer-working-supplies/>) and accessing Public Sector Buying Organisations' e-catalogues.

■ Schools: Period Poverty**Janet Daby:**[\[68427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to eradicate period poverty in schools.

Vicky Ford:

On 20 January 2020, the department launched a new scheme which makes free period products available in state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England.

This is an important step to ensure that menstruation does not present a barrier to learning and that no one is held back from reaching their potential.

We are continuing to monitor schools' engagement with the scheme during the COVID-19 outbreak. All schools and colleges continue to be able to order period products and to distribute them to learners according to their own local arrangements.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus**Tahir Ali:**[\[67766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on children in social care in (a) Birmingham, Hall Green constituency and (b) the UK.

Vicky Ford:

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is a top priority for the government. The COVID-19 outbreak represents a time of severe pressure across society, which we know presents heightened levels of risk for some children, especially those known to social care.

We have been working closely with local authorities, including Birmingham, to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on vulnerable children and ensure that children are being adequately protected.

Our Regional Education and Care Team (REACT) for the West Midlands is in contact with Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham Council on a regular basis, to understand how they are supporting vulnerable children to attend school and ensure their systems and processes for maintaining contact with vulnerable children are robust. We also collect fortnightly data from local authorities across the country, including Birmingham, around their contact with vulnerable children, workforce availability and other system pressures in order to offer support and challenge where needed.

The government has provided £3.7 billion of additional funding to support local authorities in meeting COVID-19 related pressures, including for looked after children and wider children's services.

We are continuing to intervene with local authorities that have been found to be failing in their delivery of children's services and judged inadequate by Ofsted. It

remains an absolute priority for the government that children are kept safe. Where they are in place, we have also asked commissioners and advisers to support local authorities, for example, by helping them to manage conflicting priorities and reviewing their contingency plans to ensure they are robust.

Our guidance on supporting vulnerable children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found at:

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

■ Teachers: Holiday Leave

Rachael Maskell:

[62517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that teachers and school leaders are able to take leave over the 2020 summer holidays.

Nick Gibb:

We are not asking schools to open over the summer holidays and there is not an expectation that schools should open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers over this period. Teachers, support staff and headteachers deserve a break, to recharge and rest.

We are aware that some headteachers may be considering using their catch-up premium to provide summer school activities for their pupils. Where this is the case, they have the flexibility, discretion and autonomy to decide how they want to do this.

To support schools in planning how to use the catch-up premium, the Education Endowment Foundation has produced a guide which includes advice on summer schools and contains a link to a Teach First toolkit specifically focused on summer schools, for schools that choose to do this. A link to the guide can be found here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/>

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[61577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to help prevent universities from becoming insolvent as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Afzal Khan:

[61579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to provide additional financial support to universities to supplement any shortfall in funding as a result of declining student numbers in the 2020/21 academic year.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak is bringing significant financial challenges to the higher education (HE) sector and we have been working closely with the sector to monitor the likely impacts.

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

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

On 27 June, the government announced a further package of support to research-active universities to enable them to continue their research and innovation activities. This includes £280 million of government funding, and a package of low-interest loans with long pay-back periods, supplemented by a small amount of government grants, which will be available from autumn. In sharing responsibility for the future of science and research with our world-leading university system, the government will cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020/21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity.

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

The department is working closely with HM Treasury and other government departments to develop a restructuring regime for HE providers in England. We will only intervene where we find there is a case to do so and only where we believe intervention is possible and appropriate, and as a last resort. A restructuring regime will review providers' circumstances and assess the need for restructuring, financial support and any attached conditions. We are discussing our approach with the devolved administrations.

■ Universities: Staff

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[68299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has published for universities on furloughing employees on zero hours contracts during the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

During and after the COVID-19 outbreak, our aim is for higher education (HE) providers to continue to deliver HE provision and to support the needs of staff and students, both on-campus and off-campus.

The department issued guidance on 17 April for HE providers so that they are aware of the support available to them and can apply for it. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>.

This guidance confirms that HE providers can access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help safeguard staff jobs. The linked guidance from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs confirms that employers can claim for employees on any type of employment contract, including full-time, part-time, agency, flexible or zero-hour contracts.

In developing this guidance, the department worked with trade unions as well as Universities UK and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association. We continue to work with the sector to provide further clarification as necessary to help providers understand how they can access the range of measures on offer.

■ Vocational Education: Young People

Scott Benton:

[68443]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the number of vocational training places available to young people who wish to acquire practical and trade qualifications.

Gillian Keegan:

We are introducing new T Levels from this September – high quality, practical courses designed by employers that will provide a credible alternative to A levels and prepare students for skilled work or further study.

We are currently reforming and simplifying the qualifications system so that learners can easily find high-quality qualifications that give them the skills they need. With our proposals, any qualification, including existing ones, can be approved if they provide learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers need.

We have also been working across Government to build a package of support measures to boost skills among those who will be hardest hit by the labour market impacts of COVID-19. On 8 July the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced measures across a range of targeted work-based training offers to support people to build the skills they need to get into work. This amounts to investment of £1.6 billion in employment support schemes which will substantially expand existing provision. This includes:

- £111 million to triple the number of traineeships;
- £17 million to triple the number of sector-based work academy placements;
- Paying businesses to take on new apprentices – an extra £2000 for each apprentice under 25 and £1,500 for apprentices over 25;
- £32 million to help 269,000 more people receive advice from the National Careers Service;

- £101 million for school/college leavers to study high value courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

■ Young People: Unemployment

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on support for 18 year olds, who are facing unemployment in July 2020 after formally leaving school, with further training opportunities.

Gillian Keegan:

The government is actively considering ways to help young people continue to develop the skills they will need for the future. We want to give young people the best chance to succeed, despite these challenging and unsettling times.

The department is exploring options for boosting skills to help the labour market recover from the economic effects of COVID-19, including the vital role that our work based offers such as apprenticeships and traineeships can play in securing young people a high quality place in the labour market. This will be particularly important for young people. Training will be crucial for those without work, so that they maintain their work-readiness and gain new skills and quickly move into a high-quality job. We are considering our skills offer, as well as working with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure a strong partnership with Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus have already started to re-engage with new and existing claimants and are signposting them to appropriate support.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Nick Smith:

[\[68309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 61707 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, if his Department will publish the estimates made of demand for seasonal workers for (a) July, (b) August and (c) September 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

We are working closely with industry to monitor labour needs over the remainder of the 2020 harvest season. This is difficult to pin down in exact numbers, since employers are making their own commercial decisions on the number of workers they need, depending on their individual circumstances. We understand from industry feedback that labour needs are currently being met and that the majority of businesses have sourced sufficient workers for the remainder of the season.

Nick Smith:

[\[68310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 61710 on Agriculture: Seasonal Workers, if his

Department will publish details of (a) the Government's co-investment partners and (b) the amount they have invested.

Victoria Prentis:

In addition to Defra, the partners for the Pick for Britain website are the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Association of Labour Providers (ALP), The British Growers Association (BGA) and Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Links to the websites of all of these organisations are shown on the Pick for Britain website.

The AHDB provides the digital infrastructure for the Pick for Britain website using existing in-house resources and at minimal additional cost, all other partners have contributed their time and knowledge.

■ **Beekeeping: Equipment**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[68290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on removing VAT from bee keeping equipment to help enable an increase in pollinators and benefit the environment.

Rebecca Pow:

Protecting pollinators is a priority for this Government. They are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production.

Our National Pollinator Strategy sets out how Government, conservation groups, farmers, beekeepers and researchers can work together to improve the status of pollinating insect species in England.

There are no plans at present to seek discussions with the Chancellor on the removal of VAT from beekeeping equipment. Defra maintains awareness of key issues affecting the beekeeping sector through regular contact with national associations and other stakeholders and I am satisfied that our current approach to supporting beekeeping is effective.

Government support primarily involves operating a system of apiary inspections and the provision of funding for training. These measures are valuable in helping beekeepers to maintain and improve their husbandry skills and in keeping levels of honey bee pests and disease to a minimum.

National Bee Unit inspectors also deliver our contingency response and their success in dealing with incursions of the invasive Asian hornet has been of great benefit to our beekeepers.

■ **Beverage Containers: Recycling**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[67808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward the date for the Deposit Return Scheme to be introduced.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government committed in its manifesto to introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers. We are seeking powers to do so in the Environment Bill. Since consulting on its introduction in 2019, the Government has been developing proposals for a DRS using further evidence and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. The Government plans to undertake a second consultation on a DRS in early 2021. In preparation for that consultation, we are currently reviewing the proposed timeline for its introduction.

■ **Cats: Coronavirus****Scott Benton:**[\[67806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to increase public awareness of the importance of keeping unneutered cats aged four months and over inside while access to neutering services is limited during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

We welcome animal welfare charity campaigns, including those by Cats Protection, encouraging people to both microchip and neuter their cats and we have included such messaging in the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats about responsible ownership of cats, a copy of which can be found on the GOV.UK website. Anyone considering acquiring a kitten should ensure, before they take possession of it and if they do not intend it to breed, that they can arrange for it to be neutered. Many veterinary practices are now carrying out certain non-essential work such as neutering, but it is up to individual vets to decide whether to do this. As always owners should refer to their vets for advice about neutering and breeding control.

■ **Fish: Exports****Luke Pollard:**[\[67756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Border Inspection Post (BIP) status of Calais and Boulogne Sur Mer on UK fish exports after 31 December 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The EU designated a number of temporary Border Inspection Posts ahead of 31 October 2019. These approvals were contingent on the UK leaving the EU on that date and they will need to be redesignated as Border Control Posts before the end of the transition period. Under this designation it was our understanding that fishery products entering the EU via Calais or Coquelles would travel to the dedicated BCP at Boulogne-sur-Mer, under Common Transit (CTC), where checks would be carried out. It is for the French authorities to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place from 1 January 2021.

■ Fishing Catches: Computer Software

Luke Pollard:

[\[67759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to all the Catch-APP trip data submitted by fishermen, how many trips have been (a) submitted by fishermen and (b) compared to corresponding sales notes.

Victoria Prentis:

Up to 30 June 2020, the Marine Management Organisation received 26,333 catch records and 31,261 sales notes from under 10 metre English-licenced fishing vessels.

Catch records submitted through the Catch App and data submitted through sales notes are not always directly comparable. Catch records from multiple landings by the same vessel can be combined into one sale, and sales to multiple buyers can be generated from a single landing. In addition, fishers are able to sell fish directly to members of the public for private consumption in batches of up to 30kg without the requirement for submission of a sales note.

■ Fishing Vessels: Inspections

Luke Pollard:

[\[67757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many non-UK flagged commercial fishing vessels were inspected at sea by UK authorities in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries control and enforcement is a devolved matter. The information provided relates to inspections carried out by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) only and does not include statistics from the devolved administrations.

Number of non-UK flagged commercial fishing vessels that were inspected at sea by the MMO.

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
239	162	151	96	303

■ Peat Bogs: Fires

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[67653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to (a) ban burning of peatland and (b) tackle accidental peat fires.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has always been clear of the need to phase out burning of protected blanket bog to conserve these vulnerable habitats. We are currently looking at how legislation could achieve this and considering next steps. Real progress is

being made in promoting sustainable alternatives. We have urged landowners to adopt these and continue to work with them constructively.

We are working across Government with a wide range of stakeholders including land managers, conservation bodies and wildfire management groups to ensure that we promote better planning for wildfire locally and take measures to mitigate against the risk of wildfire. We undertook a review of the impact of wildfire and upland environments in 2019 and will publish the findings in due course.

■ Poultry Meat: Imports

Luke Pollard: [\[68422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the ban on chemical washes for chicken is maintained after the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Pollard: [\[68423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the ban on the chlorine-washing of poultry carcasses applies to (a) peracetic acid, (b) lactic acid and (c) other pathogen reduction treatments; whether it is the Government's policy to maintain that ban after the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Pollard: [\[68424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy that the import ban on (a) chlorine or acid-washed chicken, (b) hormone-treated beef, (c) ractopamine-fed pork, (d) dairy products from BST treated cows and (e) eggs from battery caged hens will continue after the transition period ends; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

This Government is committed to upholding our high food standards and rules on food safety will be retained in domestic UK law. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will transfer existing food safety provisions, including related import requirements, onto the UK statute book.

This includes the law that no products, other than potable water, are approved in the UK to decontaminate poultry carcasses. This applies to both domestic and imported products and will continue to operate independently in UK law after the Transition Period.

The UK currently applies prohibitions on the use of growth promoting hormone treatments, including beta agonists and ractopamine, as well as prohibitions on the sale of animal products derived from animals treated with them. These rules will be retained at the end of the Transition Period.

There is no import ban in the UK or EU on dairy products from cows treated with bovine somatotropin or on eggs from battery caged hens; in both cases, however, consignments must be accompanied by animal and public health certification and come from approved countries and establishments.

As we committed to in our manifesto, this Government will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food safety standards.

■ Recycling: Greater London

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[68329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to improve the consistency of household recycling collections among boroughs in London.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to introducing consistency in recycling in all boroughs in England including those in London. The Environment Bill seeks to introduce legislation for a core set of materials (glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food and garden waste) to be collected for recycling from households, businesses and other organisations such as schools. The Environment Bill does not require garden waste to be collected from businesses and non-domestic premises.

A core set of materials will avoid confusion amongst householders with regard to what can be recycled. This in turn will result in more materials being recycled.

The Government has committed to covering the costs of any additional burdens that local authorities face as a result of new statutory duties that require them to implement consistency.

■ Seafood: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard:

[\[67755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the covid-19 Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS), how many people sat on the panel that determined who received the DSSS grants; how the industry representatives on the panel, that were appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to determine who should receive funding, were chosen by the MMO; and what the scoring process and weighting was that was used to determine who should receive funding through the DSSS grant scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme is administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of Defra.

The panel included eight individuals representing Defra, Seafish, the MMO and representatives from key industry stakeholder groups from the fishing industry, on the basis of their experience and expertise of the seafood industry in England and grant funding procedures.

Applications were assessed against the published scheme criteria.

■ Shopping: Disability

Sarah Olney:

[\[68400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take steps to provide additional support for disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak to ensure that disabled people are able to access a weekly shop for essential items.

Victoria Prentis:

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 continue to work 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.

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.

■ Water Supply

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[68328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to reduce residential demand for water in the next 10 years.

Rebecca Pow:

We recently consulted on *Measures to reduce personal water consumption*.

A Government response to this consultation will be published by the end of 2020, which will set out intended steps to improve water efficiency.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**■ China: Uighurs****Richard Thomson:**[\[67807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Chinese Government on upholding religious freedoms in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of that country.

Nigel Adams:

On 30 June, the UK read out a statement on behalf of 27 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council highlighting concerns about human rights violations in Xinjiang and urging China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meaningful access to the region. On 9 March, the Foreign Secretary raised the same concerns with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi.

■ Democracy and Human Rights**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[68371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when his Department next plans to publish the annual report on human rights and democracy abroad.

Nigel Adams:

We intend to publish the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 2019 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report before Parliament rises for the summer recess.

■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Energy**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[59362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much energy his departmental buildings used in (a) 2020 and (b) each of the last five years.

Nigel Adams:

Information relating to the FCO's commitment to reducing energy consumption can be found in the *FCO Sustainability Report 2018/19* on the gov.uk website here. A breakdown of energy consumption by site can be found on page 34.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[67673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions (a) he and (b) the Secretary of State for International Development had with (i) NGOs, (ii) aid recipients, (iii) local in-country representatives and (iv) other key stakeholders before the announcement of 16 June 2020 to merge his Department with the Department for International Development.

James Duddridge:

The Government continues to engage with all relevant stakeholders, including UK and international Non-Governmental Organisations, on issues relating to the merger. The Prime Minister has concluded that in the next decade, international issues will be even more important to the lives of our citizens and our own national interest; that the world will become even more complex and competitive, with growing, interconnected challenges and opportunities for the UK; and that therefore we need a new all-of-government approach if we are to secure our values and interests in a changing world.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Overseas Aid**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[67609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to ensure that official development assistance is spent effectively on tackling poverty and gender inequalities after the merger of his Department and the Department for International Development.

James Duddridge:

Spending 0.7 percent of our national income on aid is enshrined in law. The UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 also makes a consideration of gender equality in all UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) a legal requirement, ensuring that gender equality remains at the heart of our work.

The Prime Minister is committed to a unified British foreign and development policy that will maximise our influence around the world, including on gender equality and poverty. We will continue to be guided by our responsibilities under the International Development Act, including a commitment to poverty reduction. As the Prime Minister has said, the work of UK aid to reduce poverty will remain central to the new Department's mission.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[67679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to retain staff expertise and experience of working directly with local communities held within the Department for International Development when that Department is merged with his Department.

James Duddridge:

The Department for International Development (DFID) has amassed world class expertise and all of its people can take pride in how they have helped transform hundreds of millions of lives around the world. Merging the departments will mean changes for how teams are structured and some roles and responsibilities will change, but there will be no compulsory redundancies. The ambition, vision and expertise of DFID staff will remain at the heart of the new department - taking forward the work of UK aid which will remain central to the mission of the new department.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

Helen Hayes: [\[67710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff are working four hour shifts at any time under the Serco track and trace contract.

Helen Hayes: [\[67711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff are employed under the Serco test and trace contract.

Helen Hayes: [\[67712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many calls on average tracers are making during a four hour shift under the Serco track and trace contract.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: NHS Test and Trace is supported by a three-tier operating model in England. Tier 3 are call handlers employed by Serco and SITEL and phone the contacts of COVID-19 cases who need to self-isolate.

Serco and SITEL are contracted to provide a level of resource as defined within their contractual terms to ensure tier 3 calls are made seven days per week between the hours of 08:00 – 20:00.

As at the end of June, 18,488 people were employed as Tier 3 call handlers. Serco employs 10,788 people and SITEL 7,700, and all tier 3 call handlers work four hours or more per shift.

Throughout June tier 3 call handlers, on average, made 146 call attempts per hour.

■ Coronavirus: Aviation

Nick Fletcher: [\[46193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons it is the Government's policy that people travelling to the UK from (a) France and (b) Ireland do not need to quarantine after their arrival in the UK during the covid-19 pandemic.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From 8 June, all passengers arriving in the United Kingdom without having travelled through another part of the Common Travel Area must provide their contact details, and will be required to self-isolate for 14 days, apart from those who belong to an exempted group. This includes those travelling from France. Those travelling from Ireland, which is part of the Area, and who have remained within the Area for 14 days or more, are exempt from the new temporary measures. This allows us to maintain the unique arrangements of the Common Travel Area, and we are in close contact with the Irish Government as we each work to tackle COVID-19.

■ Hepatitis

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[66829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 7 January 2014 to Question 181906 on monthly payments through the Skipton Fund Stage 2 to people who contracted Hepatitis C through NHS treatment, and Answer of 17 December 2014 to Question 218002 on monthly payments from MFET Ltd to people who contracted HIV through NHS treatment, whether people who meet the Hepatitis C Stage 1 and Hepatitis C Special Category Mechanism under the EIBSS eligibility criteria will receive annual payments for the rest of their lives.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Since 1988, successive Governments have voluntarily provided ex-gratia financial and non-financial support for people affected by HIV and/or hepatitis C through historic treatment with National Health Service-supplied blood or blood products in the 1970s and 80s.

The England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) was established in 2017. Devolved support schemes were also set up in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. This model of support replaced that historically provided by the Alliance House organisations, which included the Skipton Fund.

EIBSS provides tiered non-discretionary annual payments to eligible infected beneficiaries, based on their type and stage of infection. The majority of beneficiaries opt for these payments to be split into monthly instalments.

We will consider any recommendations when the Infected Blood Inquiry reports, including any around financial support.

HOME OFFICE

■ Domestic Abuse: Pets

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[69717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle the use of pets by perpetrators as tools to coerce and control victims of domestic abuse.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[69718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which perpetrators of domestic abuse use pets as a form of coercion and control; and if she will include guidance on that issue in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

Victoria Atkins:

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and can affect all parts of a victim's life and relationships, including those with pets.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will help to better protect and support the victims of all forms of domestic abuse, including coercive control, and help bring perpetrators to justice.

We have published draft statutory guidance to accompany the legislation and to provide explanation of the different characteristics of domestic abuse, which includes reference to how pets may be used by perpetrators.

■ Licensed Premises

Daniel Zeichner: [\[67668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for cumulative impact zones of the temporary licensing provisions in the Business and Planning Bill automatically to enable any premises with a licence to sell alcohol also to sell off-sales.

Kit Malthouse:

The purpose of the temporary licensing provisions in the Business and Planning Bill is to support licensed premises in re-opening after the covid-19 lockdown. In the light of this, the Government considers it inappropriate to exclude premises located in cumulative impact zones.

■ Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation

Bob Blackman: [\[68326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2020 to Question 57185 on Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, how the criteria for applying restrictions on international organisations involved in terrorism used by her Department differs to the criteria used by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation.

James Brokenshire:

HM Treasury (OFSI) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are responsible on behalf of Her Majesty's Government for domestic and international counter-terrorism (CT) sanctions respectively. The Home Office does not administer any CT sanctions regimes.

The Home Office is responsible for a number of tools that can be used to support the Government's efforts to tackle the threat from terrorism. The tests that must be satisfied before these tools can be used varies between the different tools.

■ Prostitution: Criminal Records

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[67586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits to the health, safety, and welfare of sex workers of expunging criminal records relating to sex work to remove barriers to accessing other jobs.

Victoria Atkins:

There are a number of activities that can be associated with sex work and prostitution which are offences. This includes activities linked to exploitation, such as controlling prostitution and activities that can present a public nuisance.

Where a conviction has become spent, individuals are treated as rehabilitated in respect of that offence and are not obliged to declare it for most purposes, such as when applying for most jobs.

The Government's priority is to tackle harm and exploitation associated with sex work and prostitution and believes that people who want to leave prostitution should be given every opportunity to find routes out. To this end, we work closely with the police and other criminal justice agencies to ensure legislation achieves these aims. Since 2016 we have also provided funding through the Tampon Tax Fund and VAWG Transformation Fund to specialist organisations and projects supporting sex workers.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Elliot Colburn:**[\[67790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to strengthen enforcement powers in respect of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Kit Malthouse:

I refer my Hon Friend to the answer I gave to UIN 62648 on 02 July 2020 to the Hon Member for Sevenoaks.

[On 5 November 2019, the Government launched a consultation seeking views on measures to strengthen police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. The consultation closed on the 5 March. We will announce the outcome of this consultation in due course].

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus****Sally-Ann Hart:**[\[67819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment the Government has made of the timeliness of distribution of covid-19 relief funds by (a) unitary councils, (b) two-tier councils and (c) combined authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has put forward a package of support for business in recognition of the disruption caused by COVID-19. As part of this, as of 28 June, £10.57 billion has been paid out to over 861,000 business properties under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF). Local authorities are working hard to make grant payments to eligible businesses across the country at pace and we are continuing to work closely with them to deliver the

remaining funding. We have published a full breakdown of grant funding allocated to and distributed by each local authority here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses> .

■ Local Government: Reorganisation

Sally-Ann Hart: [\[67820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate his Department has made of the potential savings generated from local authorities adopting unitary status.

Sally-Ann Hart: [\[67821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits for local authorities of adopting unitary status.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We believe areas moving to unitary status with more sustainable and efficient councils can have significant benefits for local people and businesses, including improved and more affordable local services, stronger and more accountable local leadership, and by removing a layer of governance enabling town and parish councils and local communities to be genuinely empowered.

Ernst & Young's 2016 ^[1] study of the two-tier councils in England estimated that each existing two-tier county area moving to a single unitary could produce annual savings (post implementation costs) approaching £30 million. A number of areas are now talking to us about unitarisation and are estimating annual savings of some £50 million.

[1][Independent Analysis of Governance Scenarios and Public Service Reform in County Areas](#), EY, September 2016.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-pacific Partnership

Gareth Thomas: [\[68276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she is seeking side letters to enable the UK to derogate from elements of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership during negotiations to accede to that agreement; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

Any final decision to join CPTPP will consider the progress of bilateral negotiations with CPTPP members and our confidence that we will be able to negotiate accession on terms compatible with the UK's broader interests and domestic priorities. If the UK Government decides to formally apply for accession, we will publish our negotiation

objectives, an economic scoping assessment, and a formal response to the Government's public consultation.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation and Package Holidays: Coronavirus

Andrew Percy: [\[68313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to guarantee refunds for flights and holidays cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Percy: [\[68314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on progress on refunding passengers for flights cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak; and whether refund credit notes for package travel are financially protected under the Atol scheme.

Andrew Percy: [\[68315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that airlines refund passengers for flights cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Percy: [\[68316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to support the aviation industry to fulfil its legal obligations on passenger refunds during the covid-19 outbreak; and what plans he has to introduce a Travel Guarantee Fund to support travel companies during that outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

There have been no changes to consumer law, and airlines are expected to abide by this and honour consumer rights. We have been clear with industry that when consumers are entitled to a refund and ask for one, refunds must be paid in a timely manner, and the process should not be unduly difficult for consumers.

My department is working to consider the impacts of COVID-19 on the ATOL Scheme, proposals for vouchers, and the payment of refunds for cancelled holidays and flights. We are working to reach a position on this issue that balances the need to protect consumer rights whilst recognising the continuing pressure on industry.

The Civil Aviation Authority are responsible for enforcing European Regulation 261/2004. My department works closely with the Civil Aviation Authority and has regular discussions with them about the range of issues that have arisen from the COVID-19 crisis – including issues relating to enforcement action in respect of refund payments.

On 1 July 2020 the Civil Aviation Authority provided an update on its website about its review into the refund policies of airlines during the coronavirus pandemic. They are reviewing the refund policies of all UK airlines, as well as a number of international

airlines that operate flights to and from the UK. The review is considering how airlines are handling refunds for flight-only bookings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ **Cycling: Greater Manchester**

Andrew Gwynne: [\[68681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in relation to strategic pop-up cycle routes in the city-region.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has regular discussions with the Mayors of Combined Authorities including Greater Manchester Combined Authority. To help fund measures such as pop-up cycle lanes, the Department has allocated Greater Manchester Combined Authority £3,174,000 from tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund and indicatively allocated £12,697,000 from tranche 2. The Department also issued new network management duty guidance to all local authorities in May with advice on measures to reallocate road space, both to encourage active travel and to enable social distancing.

■ **M67: Bridges**

Andrew Gwynne: [\[68682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for work to commence on the reconstruction of the bridge at St Anne's Road, Denton, at Junction 2 of the M67; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Pursuant to the answer to Question 60714, Highways England intends to commence survey work on the bridge between July and December 2020. Enabling works, including opening the closed section of St Anne's Road to allow implementation of the diversion route, are intended to start in April 2021. Highways England will start main demolition and construction work in October 2021, with construction lasting for two years. It has no further update on the proposed works at this time.

■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

Ms Karen Buck: [\[67502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 60669, what the difference is in frequency of the additional financial scrutiny of train operators and the two operators that are in direct public ownership under the Emergency Measures Agreements as compared to those undertaken periodically under existing Franchise Agreement obligations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) have introduced a formal process of budget reviews in each four-week rail period to enable additional financial scrutiny of operators. This is a new process to reflect the fact that the Government is bearing

financial risk on almost all operator costs under the EMAs. This risk previously sat with the private operators. The two operators under direct public ownership are not under EMA provisions but follow similar requirements.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[67505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 60677 on railways: coronavirus, what restrictions have been placed on the payment of dividends to shareholders during the Emergency Measures Agreements term.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) prohibit the payment of dividends to shareholders during the six-month EMA term.

Richard Fuller:

[\[68307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to (a) increase flexible season ticketing options and (b) increase the cost effectiveness of travel for rail users who are required to travel but with less frequency as a result of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviour. As we move from lockdown to recovery, it is important that we get the balance right in the short and medium term between managing demand and ensuring that we provide better value for money for passengers going forward. The Department is working with industry to explore already available options for flexible commuters, such as carnets, and what steps could be taken quickly to make these as useful and convenient for passengers as possible.

■ Railways: Fares

Jane Hunt:

[\[68451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that rail fares support (a) new working patterns, (b) the UK tourism industry and (c) a green recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviour. To support a green recovery and new working patterns, the Department is working with industry to explore already available options for flexible commuters, such as carnets, and what steps could be taken quickly to make these as useful and convenient for passengers as possible.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is leading work to support the UK tourism industry, and the Department for Transport stands ready to support on any rail-related activities.

■ Railways: Franchises**Ms Karen Buck:**[\[67503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2020 to Question 60670 on railways: franchises, by what date his review of the approach to the contractual arrangements following the period in which the Emergency Measures Agreements apply will be completed; and where he plans to publish that review.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Operators that have entered into Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) will see a temporary suspension of their existing franchise agreement's financial mechanisms for a period of six months.

The arrangements after the EMA period ends are being developed and will be announced in due course.

■ Railways: North West**Christian Wakeford:**[\[68460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders in the North West on the Integrated Rail Plan.

Andrew Stephenson:

I have held a series of regional roundtables with political and business leaders, including those from the North West, inviting them to set out their priorities for rail in their areas. I will continue to seek views from regional representatives as work on the Integrated Rail Plan continues over the coming months.

The Integrated Rail Plan will also be informed by a 'Rail Needs Assessment' from the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), which is now considering evidence from stakeholders across the Midlands and the North.

■ River Thames: Boats**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[68357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when Maritime and Coastguard Agency passenger boat surveyors plan to restart survey assessments and approvals on passenger boats on the Thames.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[68358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to (a) reduce or (b) remove the fees for statutory inspections and surveys carried out on passenger boats by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Ruth Cadbury:[\[68359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what representations he has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on financial support for the domestic passenger boat industry.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will resume its statutory obligations to survey and inspect domestic passenger boats in the UK, including those operating on the Thames, on 20 July and will use a risk-based approach.

The details of the plans for resumption of these activities were made available to the maritime industry on 6 July.

The MCA has no plans to (a) reduce or (b) remove the fees for statutory inspections and surveys that their Marine Surveyors perform on passenger boats.

The Government has announced an unprecedented package of financial measures worth £350 billion to support companies of all sizes through the COVID-19 pandemic. My Department's officials and I have been working closely with a wide range of operators, including passenger ferry operators, to understand how these measures can be applied and have continued to offer our support to them during this difficult time.

Roads: Greater Manchester**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[68683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to include the trunk road network in the proposed Greater Manchester Clean Air strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The government and Highways England continue to work with Greater Manchester authorities to finalise their plans to improve air quality as set out in the 2017 UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. We have no current plans to include any parts of the Strategic Road Network in a charging clean air zone.

TREASURY**Aerospace Industry: Coronavirus****Jon Trickett:**[\[70325\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will introduce a sector specific job protection package for the aerospace industry in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the aerospace sector as a result of COVID-19. Firms experiencing difficulties as a result of COVID-19 can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

As of midnight 28 June 2020, the CJRS has helped 1.1 million employers across the UK furlough 9.3 million jobs, protecting people's livelihoods.

The furlough scheme will remain open until October.

It would be challenging to target the CJRS to specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way, and it may not be the case that this is the most effective or sensible way to provide longer term support for those sectors most affected by coronavirus.

It would also be difficult to target the CJRS at specific sectors without creating distortion, particularly as some firms work across multiple sectors. There are other schemes (including CBILS) that can provide support to specific firms.

The government will continue to engage with businesses and representative groups with the aim of ensuring that support provided is right for these sectors and for the economy as a whole.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

Owen Thompson:

[\[67696\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department's response to the consultation on the review of Small Brewers' Relief, which closed on 17 March 2019, will be published.

Kemi Badenoch:

The conclusions of the Treasury review of Small Brewers Relief will be published by the Autumn.

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Jane Hunt:

[\[69748\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of providing businesses located in the vicinity outside a local covid-19 lockdown area with additional financial support to mitigate the effect of restricted movement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government has delivered on its promise to stand by businesses and workers throughout the pandemic and has provided one of the most comprehensive and generous packages of support globally. This support has included billions of pounds for businesses through loans and grants, support for millions of jobs through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, deferred VAT payments, and a lease forfeitures moratorium for commercial tenants. The Chancellor recently extended the furlough scheme until the end of October and a host of these other support measures are still available to support businesses. Additionally, on 8 July the Chancellor announced the Plan for Jobs, the measures in which will provide additional support to all businesses as we reopen the economy.

We are continuing to review the economic situation and will continue helping businesses through this crisis where it is appropriate.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67544\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what steps the Government is taking to prioritise improvements in air quality as part of his economic recovery plans.

Kemi Badenoch:

We remain determined to tackle air pollution and the negative impacts that it has on public health, the economy and the environment. This is why we recently announced a £2 billion package to create a new era for cycling and walking – the largest ever boost for cyclists and pedestrians – which includes £225 million to help local authorities create pop-up cycle lanes and reallocate road space. This package builds on the recent Budget announcements of £1bn in further support to promote the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles, including up to £500m to support the rollout of a super-fast charging network, and a further £304m to reduce nitrogen dioxide emissions.

■ Economic Situation: Yorkshire and the Humber

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67543\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government's strategy for a green economic recovery is incorporated into plans for the economic recovery of (a) Yorkshire and (b) North Lincolnshire after the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced in decades. We recognise that every region and community will be feeling the impacts of this crisis; that is why the Government has announced unprecedented support for business and workers around the country. Alongside the focus on supporting the economy, the Government continues to take its environmental responsibilities very seriously.

We want local areas to capitalise on their strengths as we move to restart the economy and make progress to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Supporting sustainable industry in the northern industrial clusters will help us achieve these goals.

At Spring Budget, the Government announced at least £800 million for to support at least 2 Carbon Capture and Storage adoption within industrial clusters, of which the Humber and Teesside are candidates.

This will accompany £95 million to fund shovel-ready projects across the East Midlands and £123.1 million for projects across Yorkshire and Humber to help provide a boost to the local economy and create jobs.

■ Government Assistance: Wolverhampton South West

Stuart Anderson:

[\[68429\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to provide additional financial support to disadvantaged areas in Wolverhampton South West constituency; and what steps he is taking to tackle levels of unemployment in that constituency area.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government recognises that every region and community will be feeling the impact of this crisis and remains committed to helping the unemployed return to work and supporting those most vulnerable to job losses.

The Government has taken unprecedented steps to support people and businesses around the country, including in Wolverhampton. This includes the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme, where in the West Midlands as of 31 May, we have supported about 697,000 jobs. We have also supported 185,000 self-employed in West Midlands through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, with claims for grants worth £521m. Local Authorities have also paid out about £10.57 billion of business grants from the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund – including over £1bn to around 88,600 business premises in the West Midlands (by 28th June). We have also allocated £58m of the hardship fund to the West Midlands.

Looking ahead, the government has allocated up to £124.1 million to fund shovel-ready projects across the West Midlands to help provide a boost to the local economy and create jobs. This investment is being targeted on areas that are facing the biggest economic challenges as a result of the pandemic. We have allocated £84m through the Brownfield Fund to deliver much needed new homes in the West Midlands while protecting greenfield sites from unnecessary development. We have also allocated £12.75 million accelerated funding from the Towns Fund to kick-start activity in towns and high streets in 15 towns across the West Midlands including Wolverhampton, helping them to meet immediate challenges from the pandemic.

We will continue to work closely with local areas to make sure that individuals and businesses are directed to the right support during this difficult period

■ Infrastructure: Carbon Emissions

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[67500\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by what criteria he plans to measure the carbon output of the recommendations in the Government's forthcoming National Infrastructure Strategy.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and remains committed to meeting our climate change and wider environmental targets, including our commitment to net zero by 2050, and our intermediate carbon budgets.

The Government will publish a landmark National Infrastructure Strategy in the Autumn which will set out plans for a once in a generation transformation of the UK's economic infrastructure to help level up the United Kingdom and decarbonise our economy.

The Green Book requires that environmental impacts, including on the legal Net Zero obligation, are considered in all government investment decisions.

■ Inland Waterways: Coronavirus

Michael Fabricant:

[\[68662\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to protect inland waterway based businesses that are affected by the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency.

This includes significant changes to the operation of statutory sick pay, universal credit, and employment and support allowance to ensure that people have quicker and more generous access to a support system, and we have taken further immediate steps to give businesses access to cash to pay its rent, salaries or suppliers.

Our economic response is one of the most generous and comprehensive globally and the government is now working urgently to deliver these schemes as quickly as possible.

The government is monitoring the impact measures are having with regard to supporting public services, businesses, and individuals, and keeps all policies under review.

■ Overseas Aid

Daisy Cooper:

[\[67782\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what reductions in the UK aid budget he has asked the (a) Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (b) Ministry of Justice, (c) Departments for (i) International Development, (ii) International Trade, (iii) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (iv) Digital Culture, Media and Sport and (v) Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and (d) Department of Health and Social Care to make in 2020-21.

Steve Barclay:

The UK has a legal commitment to spend 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) each year on Official Development Assistance (ODA). The government reviews the ODA funding it allocates to projects on a regular basis in order to ensure delivery of its commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on ODA. Given the expected fall in GNI this year, commitments of aid spending are being reviewed across all ODA spending departments.

■ Social Security Benefits

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[67542\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending (a) child benefit and (b) tax credits.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is committed to helping families through the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 outbreak. That is why at Budget 2020, and in the Chancellor's announcement on 20 March, we committed to a targeted, multi-billion-pound package of support for families this year.

We have announced measures that can be quickly and effectively operationalised, and that benefit as many disadvantaged families as possible. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue and Customs are experiencing significant increased demand and the Government must prioritise both implementing the changes we have already announced and the safety and stability of the benefits system overall.

The measures announced on 20 March include a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, a relaxation of earnings rules for self-employed Universal Credit claimants, and an increase in the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants to the 30th percentile of market rents.

This is in addition to measures announced at Budget, which included widening the scope of Statutory Sick Pay and making accessing benefits easier for those most affected by Covid-19. The Budget also announced that the Government will provide Local Authorities in England with £500 million of new grant funding to support economically vulnerable people and households in their local area.

Whilst we keep measures under review as we analyse the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable groups, we do not plan on making any further changes as we must focus all our efforts on delivering this package.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Hate Crime: LGBT People

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[68758\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what support her Department has provided to BAME LGBTQ+ youth who have been victims of (a) hate crime, (b) serious violence and (c) malicious communications in the last 12 months.

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[68759\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what support her Department has provided to trans youth who have been victims of (a) hate crime, (b) serious violence and (c) malicious communications in the last 12 months.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is clear that all hate crimes are completely unacceptable and have no place in British society. To support LGBT youth, we have invested £4m since 2016 to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, reaching 2250 schools in England.

The Government is committed to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime. Our commitments include a Law Commission review of current hate crime legislation, an assessment of local support for hate crime victims, and improving reporting and recording of LGBT hate crimes through supporting additional police training.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Coronavirus: Staffordshire****Jonathan Gullis:**[\[62672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to support people facing financial disruption in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

To support those on low incomes through the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government have introduced a package of temporary welfare measures. Taken together, these measures provide over £6.5bn of additional support through the welfare system and include: increasing Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by up to £1,040 this financial year, benefiting over 4 million households; and increasing Local Housing Allowance rates, putting an average of £600 into people's pockets this year.

We have made changes so that Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance are payable to people who are self-isolating, including those who are shielding, and who satisfy the conditions of entitlement. We have removed the waiting days so these are paid from day one. Households may also be eligible for Universal Credit.

The Government has also announced a new £500 million Hardship Fund as part of the package of measures to support those affected by coronavirus so that local authorities can support economically vulnerable people and households.

An additional £63 million of funding was confirmed by the Government on 11 June 2020, to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford essentials due to COVID-19.