



Daily Report

Wednesday, 22 July 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 22 July 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 22 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	7	■ Minerals	13
ATTORNEY GENERAL	7	■ National Grid: Carbon Emissions	13
■ Crime: Airguns	7	■ Natural Gas: Fees and Charges	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	7	■ Nickel	15
■ Airbus UK: Redundancy	7	■ Physiotherapy: Coronavirus	15
■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	7	■ Private Rented Housing: Energy	15
■ Electric Vehicles: Fuel Cells	8	■ Protective Clothing: Shops	15
■ Energy Intensive Industries	8	■ Redundancy Pay	16
■ Energy: Carbon Emissions	9	■ Redundancy Pay: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	16
■ Energy: Greater Manchester	9	■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus	17
■ Fuel Poverty	10	■ Small Businesses: Data Protection	17
■ Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988	10	■ Social Rented Housing: Carbon Emissions	17
■ Future Fund: Newcastle upon Tyne	10	■ Solar Power: Minerals	18
■ Hospitality Industry: Data Protection	11	■ Wind Power: Minerals	18
■ Housing: Water	11	CABINET OFFICE	18
■ Hydrogen	12	■ British National (Overseas): Hong Kong	18
■ Industrial Magnets: Manufacturing Industries	12	■ Census: Coronavirus	19
■ Manufacturing Industries: Minerals	13	■ Civil Servants: Location	19
■ Metals: Factories	13	■ Coronavirus: Death	19

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	20	EDUCATION	32
■ Coronavirus: West Yorkshire	20	■ Boarding Schools: Coronavirus	32
■ Exports: China	20	■ Childminding	33
■ Public Inquiries: Coronavirus	21	■ Children: Coronavirus	34
■ UK Trade with EU	22	■ Children: Mental Health	36
■ UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland	22	■ Children: Social Services	37
■ United Kingdom	22	■ Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund	37
DEFENCE	22	■ Extended Services: Coronavirus	38
■ Armed Forces: Cadets	22	■ Further Education: EU Nationals	39
■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft	24	■ GCE A-level and GCSE	39
■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement	24	■ Higher Education	39
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	25	■ Oak National Academy: Finance	40
■ 5G: Constituencies	25	■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus	41
■ Arts and Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus	25	■ Religion: Education	41
■ Arts: Equality	25	■ Schools: Air Pollution	42
■ Broadband: Rural Areas	26	■ Schools: Attendance	43
■ Companies: Misrepresentation	26	■ Schools: Coronavirus	43
■ Data Protection: Public Sector	27	■ Schools: Mental Health Services	46
■ Digital Economy Council	27	■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus	47
■ Entertainments: Coronavirus	28	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	49
■ Exercise: Children	29	■ Fisheries: Quotas	49
■ Huawei: USA	29	■ Food: Coronavirus	49
■ Internet: Safety	29	■ Furs: Imports	50
■ Music: Coronavirus	30	■ Game: Coronavirus	50
■ National Lottery Heritage Fund: Nature Conservation	30	■ Partridges: Animal Welfare	50
■ National Lottery: Coronavirus	31	■ Seas and Oceans: Acidification	51
■ Sports: Coronavirus	31		
■ Telecommunications	31		

■ Slaughterhouses: Rural Areas	52	■ Hospitals: Coronavirus	66
■ Water: Conservation	52	■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review	66
■ Welsh Water	53		
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	53	■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review: Government Responses	67
■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus	53	■ Mental Health Act 1983	67
■ Gambia: Politics and Government	54	■ Mental Health: Grenfell Tower	67
■ India: Coronavirus	55	■ NHS: Equal Pay	68
■ Istanbul: Religious Buildings	56	■ NHS: Sick Leave	68
■ Overseas Aid: Gender	57	■ NHS: Students	69
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	58	■ Nurses: Finance	69
■ Autism	58	■ Nurses: Students	70
■ Businesses: Coronavirus	58	■ Physiotherapy: Pain	70
■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing	58	■ Pregnancy	70
■ Carers	59	■ Social Distancing: Households	71
■ Carers: Coronavirus	59	■ Social Services: Contracts	72
■ Carers: Quarantine	60	■ Social Services: Pay	72
■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	60	■ Social Services: Sick Leave	73
■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software	61	■ Social Services: Welfare Tax Credits	73
■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	61	■ Spinal Injuries: Medical Treatments	73
■ Coronavirus: Holiday Accommodation	62	■ Streptococcus	74
■ Coronavirus: Mental Illness	62	■ Surgical Mesh Implants	74
■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing	62	■ Tobacco: Sweden	76
■ Coronavirus: Tattooing	63	HOME OFFICE	76
■ Dementia: Social Services	63	■ Asylum: Families	76
■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions	64	■ Asylum: Housing	76
■ Emergencies	65	■ British Nationality: Armed Forces	77
■ Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (England) 2020	65	■ Domestic Abuse	77
		■ Domestic Abuse: Children	78
		■ Domestic Abuse: Protection	79

■ Domestic Abuse: Telephone Services	79	■ Private Rented Housing: Energy	92
■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes	80	■ Private Rented Housing: Standards	93
■ Furniture: Fire Resistant Materials	80	■ Tenants: Evictions	93
■ Gangmasters: Licensing	81	■ Vulnerable Adults: Coronavirus	94
■ Immigration: British National (Overseas)	81	■ Welsh Water: Herefordshire	95
■ Metropolitan Police: Racial Discrimination	82	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	95
■ Offences against Children: Victim Support Schemes	82	■ CDC: Hospitals	95
■ Offences against Children: Victims	83	■ Department for International Development: Apprentices	95
■ Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes	83	■ Developing Countries: Remittances	96
■ Seasonal Workers: Visas	83	■ Education: Disability	97
■ Slavery	84	■ Education: Females	97
■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes	85	■ Education: Refugees	98
■ Terrorism: Victims	85	■ Gambia: Human Rights	99
■ Vetting	85	■ Gender: Equality	99
■ Visas: Disease Control	86	■ Overseas Aid: Environment Protection	100
■ Visas: Iran	86	INTERNATIONAL TRADE	100
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	87	■ Gin: USA	100
■ Buildings: Fire Prevention	87	■ Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique	101
■ District Councils: Coronavirus	87	JUSTICE	102
■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus	89	■ Prisons: Discipline	102
■ Homelessness: Bank Services	90	■ Prisons: Drugs	102
■ Leisure: Coronavirus	90	■ Prisons: Mobile Phones	102
■ Multiple Occupation: Regulation	90	NORTHERN IRELAND	103
■ Oxford-Cambridge Arc	91	■ Integrated Schools: Northern Ireland	103
		SCOTLAND	103
		■ Coronavirus: Scotland	103
		■ Devolution: Scotland	104

■ Domestic Visits: Paisley and Renfrewshire South	104	■ Individual Savings Accounts	116
■ Scotland Office: Departmental Responsibilities	104	■ Mortgages	116
■ Scots Gaelic Language	104	■ Plastics: Taxation	117
■ Self-employed: Coronavirus	105	■ Public Works Loan Board	118
■ Sovereignty: Scotland	105	■ Treasury: Written Questions	118
TRANSPORT	105	■ UK Customs Academy	119
■ Aircraft: Electric Motors	105	■ UK Relations with EU	119
■ Airports: Coronavirus	106	WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	120
■ Airspace	106	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	120
■ Aviation and Package Holidays: Repayments	107	■ Disability: Coronavirus	120
■ Aviation: Coronavirus	107	■ Equality: Staffordshire	120
■ Aviation: Electronic Commerce	108	■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus	121
■ Aviation: Renewable Fuels	109	■ Females: New Businesses	121
■ Aviation: Repayments	109	■ Females: STEM Subjects	122
■ Bus Services: Suffolk	110	■ Gender Recognition: Clinics	122
■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions	110	■ Racial Discrimination	122
■ Motor Vehicles: Safety Measures	111	WORK AND PENSIONS	123
■ Public Transport: Coronavirus	111	■ Department for Work and Pensions: Conditions of Employment	123
□ ■ Railways: Coronavirus	111	■ Industrial Health and Safety: Recycling	124
■ Road Traffic Control	112	■ Maternity Pay: Coronavirus	125
■ Travel: Coronavirus	113	■ Occupational Health: Coronavirus	125
TREASURY	113	■ Poverty: West Yorkshire	126
■ Adult Education: Finance	113	■ Social Security Benefits: Children	126
■ Aviation: Taxation	113	■ Universal Credit	127
■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	114	MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	129
■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus	114	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	129
■ EDO MBM Technology	115	■ Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust Independent Review	129
■ Employment: Coronavirus	115		
■ Green Homes Grant Scheme	115		

WRITTEN STATEMENTS	130		
CABINET OFFICE	130		
■ Consultation on 2025 UK Border Strategy	130		
■ Public Bodies 2019 and Public Appointments Data Report 2019	130		
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	131		
■ Supporting the deployment of 5G and extending mobile coverage – Planning Update	131		
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	132		
■ London Croughton Annex	132		
HOME OFFICE	133		
■ Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa and Suspension of Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong	133		
		■ Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Annual Report and Accounts 2019 – 2020	136
		■ Launching a review of the Police and Crime Commissioner model	136
		■ UK Anti-Corruption Strategy – Year 2 Update	137
		HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	138
		■ Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme 2020	138
		PRIME MINISTER	138
		■ Machinery of Government	138

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

■ Crime: Airguns

Karin Smyth:

[\[76057\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what estimate she has made of the number of young people under the age of 18 charged with air weapons offences.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS does not maintain a central record of the age of defendants charged with offences relating to air weapons. This information could only be obtained by an examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Airbus UK: Redundancy

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[73892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he will take to ensure the skills of engineers who are made redundant at Airbus are utilised as part of the economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are working closely with Airbus to help the company through Covid-19 and into recovery. I appreciate this is a worrying time for workers at Airbus who may be affected; the Government will do all that we can to support affected workers through the Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus in England, and in Wales through the services offered through the ReAct programme.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Chi Onwurah:

[\[76016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with UKRI on the reasons for UKRI funded early career researchers have not had access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was designed to support employers whose operations have been severely affected by COVID-19 by providing them with a grant to help them to continue paying part of their employees' wages who would otherwise have been laid off during this outbreak. The Government guidance states that where employers receive public funding for staff costs, and that funding is continuing, we expect employers to use that money to continue to pay staff in the usual fashion – and correspondingly not furlough them. For many early career

researchers supported by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), this would have been the case.

The Government has worked with UKRI to ensure that appropriate guidance on the use of the scheme was available on GOV.UK and accessible through the UKRI website. A number of other measures have also been announced to support researchers affected by the pandemic. On 9 April, UKRI announced costed extensions of up to 6 months for PhD students in their final year whose research had been affected. On 27 June, £260 million of funding was announced for organisations to sustain UKRI grant-funded research and fellowships.

■ Electric Vehicles: Fuel Cells

Alexander Stafford: [\[74007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what critical minerals are needed for the production of a standard fuel cell for an electric vehicle.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As set out in 'The future impact of materials security on the UK manufacturing industry' paper for the Government Office for Science in 2013, hydrogen fuel cells require catalysts made of platinum group metals.

Alexander Stafford: [\[74009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many electric vehicle fuel cells are produced in the UK annually.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The UK has world-leading expertise in hydrogen fuel cells. The scale of UK manufacturing for electric vehicles is understood to be approximately 0.5 MW annually, enough for around 100 fuel cell stacks.

The UK is well placed to be a leader in hydrogen and fuel cell powered transportation, which can support our ambitions for greener transport. The Government is supporting fuel cell manufacturers as part of the £1 billion industry-Government Advanced Propulsion Centre programme. We are also supporting the wider market through the Office for Low Emission Vehicle's £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme, which is increasing the number of publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling stations and deploying hundreds of vehicles.

■ Energy Intensive Industries

Alex Cunningham: [\[76013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will assess of the potential benefit of energy intensive industries creating their own local pipelines, independent of the national grid; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The National Transmission System (NTS) is designed to offer a secure gas supply, for the benefit of all users. Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, have

responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging. Ofgem's assessment of the potential bypass of the NTS by users can be found within their impact assessment carried out for Uniform Network Code (UNC) modification 0678A, which can be found here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/amendments-gas-transmission-charging-regime-decision-and-final-impact-assessment-unc678abcdefghij>.

Ofgem have set out in their decision letter that they will carry out an impact assessment to further explore the impacts of four shorthaul proposals and whether the proposals address the inefficient bypass of the gas network. More information on Ofgem's decision to carry out an impact assessment can be found here:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/uniform-network-code-728abcd-urgent-introduction-conditional-discount-avoiding-inefficient-bypass-nts>.

■ Energy: Carbon Emissions

Yasmin Qureshi:

[73776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to publish the Government's strategy to prioritise and accelerate net zero solutions to decarbonise energy use in order to increase operator and business confidence in investment in low carbon infrastructure.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State will publish an Energy White Paper in the Autumn which will address these issues. The White Paper will drive economic recovery and help deliver our climate goals.

■ Energy: Greater Manchester

Yasmin Qureshi:

[73775]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of (a) the implications for his Department's policies of Greater Manchester's plans to become carbon neutral by 2038 in light of the covid-19 pandemic, and (b) levels of consumer willingness to pay for a just and low cost transition to a decarbonised energy system.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The BEIS Local Energy Programme 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, through devolution, 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.

As we recover from COVID-19, the Government intends to deliver a UK economy which is stronger, cleaner, more sustainable and resilient. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Summer Statement included investments which will

both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the economic recovery, reflecting the Government's commitment to build back greener, deliver a green recovery and reach our net zero ambition.

■ Fuel Poverty

Gordon Henderson:

[\[73811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for England.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Following consultation, the Government is currently updating its Fuel Poverty Strategy for England and is considering the appropriate mix of subsidy, incentives and regulation required to meet the statutory Fuel Poverty Target to improve homes to an energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030. We plan to publish an updated fuel poverty strategy later this year.

■ Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988

Geraint Davies:

[\[73693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to publish a review of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 in response to his Department's 2014 consultation on amendments to those regulations and the accompanying technical annex.

Paul Scully:

The Government consulted in 2014 and 2016 on amending the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. The Government published a response to the 2016 consultation on 18 July 2019.

There are no plans to publish a review of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988. In its response to the 2016 consultation the Government announced that it will now develop a new approach to the regulations which is based on essential safety requirements to bring the regulations in line with modern product safety legislation.

■ Future Fund: Newcastle upon Tyne

Chi Onwurah:

[\[76018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2020 to Question 59769 on Future Fund, how many of the 252 convertible loans were issued to businesses in Newcastle.

Paul Scully:

On 21 July 2020 the British Business Bank published updated Future Fund data which gives a regional breakdown of 465 companies that have been approved for £468.7m worth of Convertible Loan Agreements since the scheme was launched on 20 May. This data is only available on a regional basis.

In the North East Region, 19 convertible loans have been approved, worth £18.7m. Of the total amount of £468.7m, 11% is to companies headquartered in the North (North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber).

■ Hospitality Industry: Data Protection

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[76127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that data collected by businesses in the hospitality industry to support test and trace is not being used for marketing purposes.

Paul Scully:

Government advice from the Department for Health and Social Care is clear. The data that is being asked to collect is personal data and must be handled in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to protect the privacy of your staff, customers and visitors.

Personal data that is collected for NHS Test and Trace, which organisations would not collect in their usual course of business, must be used only to share with NHS Test and Trace. It must not be used for other purposes, including marketing, profiling, analysis or other purposes unrelated to contact tracing, or they will be in breach of GDPR.

■ Housing: Water

Luke Pollard:

[\[73957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons the £2 billion of funding to help homeowners and landlords make their homes more energy-efficient in 2020-21 announced in the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs does not include water efficiency measures.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

In his Summer Economic Update, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £2bn Green Home Grant scheme that will support homeowners and landlords in England to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, reducing energy bills and carbon emissions, and supporting a green economic recovery.

The funding will be spent on paying for accredited tradespeople to install a range of measures, for example insulation, to improve the energy performance of their homes. Further detail on the range of measures will be announced in the coming days, before the full launch.

■ Hydrogen

Dr Luke Evans:

[73979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of UK businesses to increase their production of hydrogen supply.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Ministers and officials are engaging extensively with UK hydrogen stakeholders to inform development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier for the UK, including business models to support investment in low carbon hydrogen production.

Engagement has covered interests from production to end use, including the UK's industrial clusters with representatives from carbon capture and storage enabled hydrogen projects and potential users of hydrogen; and electrolytic hydrogen producers such as Ryse and ITM Power.

We are formalising our engagement with such stakeholders through the establishment of a Hydrogen Advisory Council, which met for the first time this week. This will enable Government to work in partnership with Industry to drive commercial demonstration and deployment of low carbon hydrogen in the 2020s.

The UK is well placed to be a world leader in both the leading low carbon hydrogen production routes - electrolysis and carbon capture and storage enabled methane reformation. We are home to the world's largest offshore wind market, have depleted oil and gas reservoirs off our coastline that could potentially store more than 78 billion tonnes of CO2 and significant underground salt beds which could provide tens of gigawatts of cost effective hydrogen storage.

The UK has world leading companies in both these production routes who are already developing major scale production projects, and a world leading innovation base that will contribute to development of the next generation of hydrogen production technologies.

■ Industrial Magnets: Manufacturing Industries

Alexander Stafford:

[74008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many industrial magnet manufacturers are located in the UK; and what their combined annual production of industrial magnets is.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The official statistics do not separately identify businesses engaging specifically in industrial magnet manufacturing. However, according to the Office for National Statistics survey on UK manufacturers sales by product, in 2018 just over 1,500 tonnes of "permanent magnets or articles intended to become permanent magnets" were estimated to be sold by UK manufacturers.

■ Manufacturing Industries: Minerals

Alexander Stafford: [\[74013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the UK manufacturing economy is dependent on critical minerals.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government does not carry any publicly available data on critical minerals and no assessment of UK manufacturing's dependency on such minerals has been made.

■ Metals: Factories

Alexander Stafford: [\[74010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative estimate he has made of the number of rare earth separation plants in (a) the UK, (b) the People's Republic of China, (c) the EU, (d) the United States, (e) Australia and (f) Canada.

Paul Scully:

The Government has made no such estimate. However, we fully recognise the importance of rare earth materials to industry, particularly those industries that underpin the clean, green economy to which we are committed such as wind turbines and low-emission vehicles.

■ Minerals

Alexander Stafford: [\[74011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many British companies mine rare earth minerals; and what proportion of total global output do they produce.

Paul Scully:

The Government is not aware of any current rare earth minerals mining activity in this country.

■ National Grid: Carbon Emissions

John McNally: [\[73875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is his policy that the National Grid should become carbon neutral by 2050.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has already legislated to deliver net zero emissions in the UK, becoming the first major economy to do so, and is working closely with Ofgem, the independent energy regulator, and industry to support the transition to a smarter, more flexible energy system. In April 2019, National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) announced it will be able to fully operate Great Britain's electricity system with zero carbon by 2025. The ability to operate a zero-carbon electricity system in 2025

is a major stepping stone to full decarbonisation of the entire electricity system in 2050.

■ **Natural Gas: Fees and Charges**

Alex Cunningham: [76012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of OFGEM's decision not to implement a short haul tariff for gas transportation in October on energy intensive industries.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging and has made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties, including Ofgem's principal objective to protect the interests of GB's energy consumers. It is their responsibility to undertake this assessment independently and manage the trade-offs between different users of the National Transmission System (NTS).

Alex Cunningham: [76014]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Ofgem on the decision not to implement a short haul tariff for gas transportation in October.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS have been in regular discussion with Ofgem regarding their Gas (Transmission) Charging Review, including their decision to carry out an impact assessment to further explore the impacts of the four shorthaul proposals put forward by industry.

BEIS officials will continue to work closely and engage with Ofgem on all matters, whilst respecting Ofgem's responsibility as an independent regulatory authority.

Alex Cunningham: [76015]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he will review the merits of OFGEM's role in relation to the setting of tariffs for gas transportation.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Ofgem, as the independent energy regulator, has responsibility for matters relating to gas network charging. Ofgem have made their decision in accordance with their statutory duties and powers provided for under the Gas Act 1986, which includes Ofgem's principal objective to protect the interests of GB's current and future energy consumers.

The framework which governs the relationship between BEIS and Ofgem is reviewed every three years. For more information on the framework which sets out the relationship between BEIS and Ofgem, please visit:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications-and-updates/framework-document-setting-out-our-relationship-beis>.

■ Nickel

Alexander Stafford: [\[74012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many kilograms of nickel are refined in the UK annually.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information requested is not reported by the Office for National Statistics.

■ Physiotherapy: Coronavirus

Luke Pollard: [\[73958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what differences were identified between physiotherapists and sport therapists which led to the Government issuing guidance for those businesses to reopen on separate dates as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Paul Scully:

Close contact services – which includes sports and massage therapy – in England, except Leicester, were able to reopen from Monday 13 July, subject to them following the COVID-secure guidelines.

■ Private Rented Housing: Energy

Wera Hobhouse: [\[73936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to raise the minimum energy efficiency standard for properties in the private rented sector to Band D by 2025.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

We committed in the Clean Growth Strategy to look at a trajectory to improve as many privately rented homes as possible to EPC Band C by 2030, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable. The Government remains committed to this ambition and intends to consult on improving the energy performance standards of privately rented homes in due course.

■ Protective Clothing: Shops

Andrew Rosindell: [\[73737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to mitigate the effect of the mandatory wearing of masks in shops on (a) customers and (b) shop workers who are (i) deaf and (ii) hard of hearing that rely on (A) lip reading and (B) facial expressions to communicate.

Paul Scully:

From 24 July all customers must wear face coverings in shops and supermarkets. This is in addition to the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport.

As is the case for public transport, there will be a range of exemptions set out in law. This will include children under 11 and those with certain disabilities.

■ Redundancy Pay

Jonathan Reynolds:

[76010]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's specific guidance is on using previous wages to calculate redundancy and notice pay; and whether that calculation should include furlough pay.

Paul Scully:

The provisions relating to calculation of redundancy and notice pay under the Employment Rights Act continue to apply when an individual is on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Employees who are dismissed due to redundancy and who satisfy certain qualifying conditions are statutorily entitled to a lump sum from their employer, based on their age, length of service and contractual weekly earnings, subject to a statutory upper limit, payable at, or soon after, the dismissal date.

During this difficult period, we urge employers to exercise discretion and not use the Job Retention Scheme to make someone redundant on less favourable terms than they would otherwise have received.

■ Redundancy Pay: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Stephen Kinnock:

[76038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department has published on how redundancy payments should be calculated for employees who have been furloughed during the covid-19 outbreak; and whether rates of pay for furloughed employees who have had variable working hours will be based on the hours they worked prior to being placed on furlough.

Paul Scully:

The provisions relating to calculation of redundancy and notice pay under the Employment Rights Act continue to apply when an individual is on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Employees who are dismissed due to redundancy and who satisfy certain qualifying conditions are statutorily entitled to a lump sum from their employer, based on their age, length of service and contractual weekly earnings, subject to a statutory upper limit, payable at, or soon after, the dismissal date.

As per the guidance for the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme, grants cannot be used to substitute redundancy payments. We would urge employers not to use the Job Retention Scheme to make someone redundant on less favourable terms than they would otherwise have received.

Full guidance on how to calculate rates of pay for employees on variable hours can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/calculate-how-much-you-can-claim-using-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Henry Smith:

[73790]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 68687, what formula was used to determine how much funding local authorities received from the Coronavirus Discretionary Grant Fund.

Paul Scully:

Each of the 314 billing authorities currently involved in the delivery of the Small Business Grants Fund and Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Fund will receive a fixed minimum allocation for the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund as a 5% uplift of the value of its in-scope hereditaments as identified at 3 May 2020. Individual letters were issued to all 314 Local Authorities on 20 May 2020 with a detailed explanation of their allocation.

■ Small Businesses: Data Protection

Alex Davies-Jones:

[76128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance his Department has provided to small businesses on data use and collection in relation to the coronavirus test and trace system.

Paul Scully:

The guidance on Test and Trace record collection can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>.

■ Social Rented Housing: Carbon Emissions

John McDonnell:

[73700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant the oral statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer entitled Summer Economic Update, Official Report, column 973, whether housing association landlords will be able to access the £50 million fund to pilot steps to decarbonise social housing.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Summer Economic Update announced £50m to demonstrate innovative approaches to retrofitting social housing at scale, accelerating the delivery of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund envisaged by the manifesto. This will mean warmer and more energy efficient homes and could reduce annual energy bills by hundreds of pounds for some of the poorest households in society, as well as lowering carbon emissions.

Further details on the Social Housing Demonstrator, including eligibility, will be announced in due course before the full launch in the Autumn.

■ Solar Power: Minerals**Alexander Stafford:** [\[74005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) types and (b) quantity in kilograms of critical minerals required to produce a standard solar panel.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has not undertaken such an assessment. However, officials' regular engagement with industry on the deliverability and sustainability of their deployment plans has elicited no concerns regarding the sourcing of critical materials.

■ Wind Power: Minerals**Alexander Stafford:** [\[74006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) types and (b) quantity in kilograms of critical minerals required to produce a wind turbine.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS has not made an assessment of the types and quantities of materials that go into producing a wind turbine.

BEIS is providing innovation support to Greenspur, a company based in Hertfordshire, to trial a new type of magnet – which does not use rare earth minerals – at the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.

CABINET OFFICE**■ British National (Overseas): Hong Kong****Paul Girvan:** [\[73057\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas who move to the UK will be eligible to vote in (a) local, (b) regional and (c) national elections.

Chloe Smith:

Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) with leave to enter or remain in the UK are entitled to register to vote as an elector in UK parliamentary elections, or local elections in England and Northern Ireland, providing they fulfil the age and residence requirements for such registration and are not subject to any other legal incapacity.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments are responsible for the franchise for local elections in Scotland and Wales, as well as elections to the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments.

■ Census: Coronavirus

John Spellar: [\[72799\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the organisation of the Census.

Chloe Smith:

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

Please note that the UK Statistics Authority is responsible for delivering the Census in England and Wales. The National Records for Scotland and the Scottish Government are responsible for the Scottish Census, and NISRA cover the Census in Northern Ireland.

Attachments:

1. UKSA response [PQ72799 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Civil Servants: Location

Royston Smith: [\[72995\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress has been made on implementing the Places for Growth programme.

Royston Smith: [\[72996\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Places for Growth Programme in assessing the potential for relocating government offices to Southampton.

Chris Loder: [\[73093\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of moving some of the civil service functions to West Dorset constituency.

Julia Lopez:

As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster set out in his [Ditchley Speech](#), the Government is determined to ensure the Civil Service is better distributed across the country. The Places for Growth Programme is working with departments and public bodies to firm up relocation plans and further details will be announced in due course. The Places for Growth programme is exploring opportunities across the whole of the UK.

■ Coronavirus: Death

Jon Trickett: [\[74442\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died as a result of covid-19 in each socio-economic group.

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 [PQ47442 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Owen Thompson:**[\[66932\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will (a) issue guidance to the general public and (b) make a public announcement advising people living in England not to enter Scotland in order to help contain the spread of covid-19.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government will not be issuing such guidance. It is important that people travelling to Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland adhere to the laws and guidelines of the relevant devolved administrations at all times.

We will continue to confront the virus as one United Kingdom, but as the virus may be spreading at different speeds across the UK, measures may need to change in different ways and on different timetables.

■ Coronavirus: West Yorkshire**Jon Trickett:**[\[74443\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people (a) under 50 years old, (b) aged 51 to 65, (c) aged 66 to 75, (d) aged 76 and above by (i) gender, (ii) ethnicity, (iii) socio-economic group and (iv) occupation have (A) tested positive for and (B) died as a result of covid-19 in (1) Hemsworth constituency, (2) Wakefield Council area and (3) West Yorkshire Combined Authority area.

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 [PQ47443 (1) (1).pdf]

■ Exports: China**James Wild:**[\[74756\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value of UK (a) goods and (b) services exports to China was in each of the last five years.

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 [PQ74756 (1).pdf]

Public Inquiries: Coronavirus

Gareth Thomas: [\[76564\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to establish an independent public inquiry on the Government's handling of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[76571\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 15 July 2020, Official Report, col. 1514, whether he plans to bring forward proposals for the independent inquiry on the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak before the House rises for Summer Adjournment.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[76573\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 15 July 2020, Official Report, col. 1514, when he plans to announce who the chair will be of the independent inquiry on the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[76574\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 15 July 2020, Official Report, col. 1514, whether people who have lost friends and family as a result of the covid-19 outbreak will be able to participate in the independent inquiry on the Government's response to the disease.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[76575\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 15 July 2020, Official Report, col. 1514, whether the independent inquiry on the Government's response to the covid-19 outbreak will be held under the powers of the Inquiries Act 2005.

Sir Edward Davey: [\[76578\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on holding a public inquiry on the UK's response to the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has always been clear that there will be opportunities to look back, analyse and reflect on all aspects of COVID-19. As the Prime Minister has said, this will include an independent inquiry at the appropriate time. For now the Government is focused entirely on responding to the pandemic and saving lives. Further details will be set out in due course and announced in the usual way.

■ UK Trade with EU**Rachel Reeves:** [75261]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to The Border with the European Union: Importing and Exporting Goods, published 13 July 2020, how much advance notice will be provided to traders to allow them to prepare accordingly for the additional Border Control Posts.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK transition period will end on 31 December 2020. The Government's new public information campaign, The UK's new start: Let's get going, sets out the actions required by businesses (including traders) and individuals to prepare for the end of the UK transition, including processes related to moving goods through Border Control Posts. Further details are available at gov.uk/transition.

■ UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland**Louise Haigh:** [73901]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many (a) customs agents and (b) official veterinarians have been recruited for processing trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland since the adoption of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 62460](#) on 25 June 2020.

■ United Kingdom**Mr Jonathan Lord:** [74554]

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department is taking to promote and protect the Union.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's [answer to the question asked by Robin Millar](#) on 16 July 2020.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Cadets****Stephen Morgan:** [76105]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of new recruits to the (a) Royal Navy, (b) Army and (c) RAF had prior experience as an armed forces cadet in (i) 2010, (ii) 2015 and (iii) 2019.

James Heappey:

The requested information is provided in the following table:

YEAR	2010	2015	2019
Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines)	8%	15%	17%
Army	-	47%	31%
Royal Air Force	22%	27%	22%

Notes:

1. Figures are single Service estimates and have not been verified by Defence Statistics.
1. Figures relate to UK Regular Armed Forces only.
1. Army figures are for Officers only and are not available for Recruiting Year 2010-11. Naval Service and RAF figures include both Officers and Other Ranks.
1. Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines) and Army figures relate to Recruiting Years i.e. 2010 equates to the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and so on. Figures for the Royal Air Force (RAF) relate to calendar year.
1. The recording of prior experience in the Cadets is not mandatory and, therefore, figures may not capture all those who have previously engaged with a Cadet organisation.
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest one per cent.

Stephen Morgan:[\[76106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department allocated to armed forces cadet forces in (a) 2009, (b) 2014 and (c) 2019.

Stephen Morgan:[\[76107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will take steps to ensure that Government funding for armed forces cadet forces is not reduced in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Stephen Morgan:[\[76108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential effect of reduced funding for armed forces cadet forces on (a) career development for young people and (b) armed forces recruitment.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence does not allocate funding directly to the Cadet Forces and there are no discreet Cadet budgets as the cost of delivering and supporting Cadet activity falls across a wide range of business areas, agencies and organisations. However, based on Financial Year 2018-19 data, the latest estimate of the cost to Defence of the Cadet Forces is approximately £175 Million.

While funding decisions will be considered across all Defence outputs in light of the Integrated Review and Spending Review, the important societal benefits and social mobility that the Cadet Forces provide are fully recognised. The Cadet Forces offer outstanding value for money, not only for Defence but across wider Government Departments and society, and this has been captured in ongoing research by the University of Northampton.

The Cadet experience can often encourage individuals to pursue a career in the Armed Forces. Of the Regular personnel currently serving, 40% of officers and 26% of other ranks were previously cadets and we see no reason why this would change in the future.

The Government is absolutely convinced of the benefits of Cadets, not just for the young people who participate but also for society as a whole, and remains committed to supporting the Cadet movement.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[75990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK F-35 pilots have been converted to the F-35 through training establishments in the (a) UK and (b) US in (i) 2018-19 and (ii) 2019-20.

James Heappey:

In Financial Year 2018-19, 14 UK F-35 pilots were trained in the United States; whilst in Financial Year 2019-20, six UK F-35 pilot were trained in the United States. No pilots completed their training in the UK within the years requested.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[75991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many pilots have been converted onto the F-35 via 207 Squadron in (a) 2018-19 and (b) 2019-20.

James Heappey:

No pilots completed their training on 207 Squadron in the UK within the years requested.

■ Type 31 Frigates: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[75988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department as part of the process for awarding the Type 31 frigate contract calculated the exportability of any prospective vessel to be lower than five per cent.

Jeremy Quin:

No. We are confident that Type 31 will be highly competitive in the export market.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ 5G: Constituencies****Chi Onwurah:**[\[74573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of whether particular constituencies are high risk of network disruption a result of the decision to exclude Huawei from UK 5G networks.

Matt Warman:

We do not anticipate any disruption.

On 14 July the Government announced that Huawei equipment will be removed from the UK's 5G networks by the end of 2027 following the introduction of further US sanctions against Huawei in May 2020. The process by which mobile operators comply with the Government's decision on Huawei is a matter for the operators themselves.

■ Arts and Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus**Janet Daby:**[\[76895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how the funding from the covid-19 financial support package for the arts and culture sector will be distributed; and whether his Department has conducted an equality impact assessment on the allocation of that funding.

Caroline Dinenage:

On 5 July, the government announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of sectors, including performing arts and theatres, museums and galleries, heritage sites, live music venues and independent cinema.

In line with our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, my department and its Arm's Length Bodies have considered equalities impacts during the policy development process, and will continue to do so during delivery. Organisations in receipt of funding will also be expected to demonstrate progress in diversity and outreach over the coming years in return for this investment into their futures.

■ Arts: Equality**Rachael Maskell:**[\[76071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that diversity is prioritised in support for (a) organisations and (b) people working in the arts and creative industries.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government's aim is to see cultural and creative sectors that are strong, vibrant and inclusive, and this can only be achieved through a diverse and representative

workforce. We recognise there is still much to be done to improve diversity and inclusion across the arts and creative industries, and are working with industry and sector bodies - including the BFI, Arts Council England and the Creative Industries Council - on a range of measures to ensure the sector better reflects the diversity of the UK through the current pandemic and beyond.

Throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, DCMS ministers and officials have been regularly engaging with stakeholders across the cultural and creative industries to ensure that their issues are fully understood in government. As part of this engagement, we have spoken with a number of organisations and individuals that are representative of the diverse nature of the nation, including at a roundtable I hosted which specifically examined the impact of Covid-19 on diversity in these sectors.

■ **Broadband: Rural Areas**

Drew Hendry:

[\[75392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish further details on (a) how the £5 billion fund for rural roll-out will be allocated to support the roll-out of full fibre broadband and (b) what share of that funding will be allocated to Scotland.

Matt Warman:

We are currently developing the pipeline of premises for initial deployment under the £5 billion investment into gigabit-capable broadband. To ensure these are successfully delivered, we need to consult plans with industry, Local Bodies and Devolved Administrations. We plan to publish the first draft pipeline later this year.

The £5bn programme will deliver to the hardest to reach premises in the UK. These are disproportionately situated in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland given their rurality. It is too early in our programme design process to provide figures of how much funding each region will receive from the programme. However, the funding will be allocated based on the number of eligible premises in that area, as opposed to the Barnett Formula.

Before we can confirm the share of the funding which will be allocated to Scotland we need the R100 programme, the Scottish superfast broadband programme, to complete its procurement phase so that we can determine which specific premises are in scope for R100 and therefore what remains to be done with funding from the £5bn. We are working with the Scottish Government to align our interventions.

■ **Companies: Misrepresentation**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[75286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect on consumer trust in the digital economy of companies manipulating Trustpilot's online review system; and which organisation is responsible for regulating those practices.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is responsible for enforcing consumer protection law online.

In May 2020 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) opened an investigation into several major websites that display online reviews. The CMA will investigate whether these websites are taking sufficient measures to protect consumers from fake and misleading reviews.

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) prohibit businesses from engaging in misleading and deceptive commercial practices against consumers to the extent that they are likely to distort the economic behaviour of the average consumer. This includes businesses using dubious tactics to boost their Trustpilot review scores. A breach of the CPRs carry criminal penalties such as unlimited fine or up to 2 years in prison and are enforced by local authority Trading Standards officers.

■ Data Protection: Public Sector**Ian Murray:**[\[73792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will adopt a list of specific high-value datasets similar to the European Commission's Directive on open data and the re-use of public sector information which was entered into force on 16 July 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK Government Licensing Framework is designed to support our drive to open up access to publicly held information and datasets, promoting transparency and enabling wider economic and social gain.

The Framework mandates the Open Government Licence, a set of terms and conditions which facilitate the re-use of a wide range of public sector information free of charge, as the default licence for Crown bodies, and recommends it for other public sector bodies. It is our policy that public sector information should be licensed for use and re-use free of charge under the Licence, with only a few exceptions.

In the global recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, open data and sharing of best practice will be more vital than ever. Data will underpin our future resilience and future economy, and further detail will be set out in our National Data Strategy, which we are aiming to publish later this year.

■ Digital Economy Council**Chi Onwurah:**[\[76024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the priorities of the Digital Economy Council are.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Digital Economy Council was set up in 2017 following publication of the 2017 UK Digital Strategy. The original aim of the Council was to drive progress on the implementation of the Strategy in the areas where the expertise and reach of members could have the greatest impact, and it has served as a valuable advisory group to Government on a range of digital and tech policy issues.

I announced last month that the government will be publishing a new digital strategy in the Autumn that reflects the new post-COVID reality. This will focus on growth and using tech to power us out of the recession, to drive productivity, and to create jobs in all parts of our economy. Members of the Digital Economy Council have shared a number of ideas with me for the Strategy, and I look forward to their further input.

Entertainments: Coronavirus**Andy Slaughter:**[\[72849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timeframe is for the reopening of the events industry as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Meetings of up to 30 people indoors are now allowed in permitted venues if social distancing can be maintained and the venue can demonstrate that it has followed the Covid-19 guidance. Since 11 July, a range of outdoor events have been able to take place - including agricultural shows, literary fairs and car boot sales.

From 1 August, exhibition and conference centres are allowed to show small groups (of up to 30 people with social distancing requirements) around to view the facilities and plan future events and to enable government-backed pilots to take place. They should not be open fully to host events more widely.

From 1 October, it is expected that events of all types (such as trade shows, consumer shows, exhibitions and conferences) will be allowed if the business has written a risk assessment and has put in place mitigations to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission. As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, our decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and public health assessments.

We have worked closely with events stakeholders through both the Visitor Economy and Events & Entertainment Working Groups to develop Covid-19 Secure reopening guidance for the business events industry. We continue to meet with the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel to discuss the specific issues facing the industry.

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■ Exercise: Children

Geraint Davies:

[\[73685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the correlation between regular exercise in childhood and levels of exercise of those same people in adulthood.

Nigel Huddleston:

Levels of physical activity for children and young people are captured through the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey which was launched in schools in September 2017. Levels of physical activity for adults 16+ are captured through the Active Lives Survey. Reports and data tables for both surveys are available on Sport England's website. Data is collected through national randomised samples, so individual results cannot be tracked, and the surveys use different methodologies so data cannot be directly compared.

■ Huawei: USA

Chi Onwurah:

[\[73825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when received a report on the policy of the US administration to impose technical sanctions on Huawei; and whether he had discussions with his counterpart in the US administration on that policy in advance of it being announced.

Matt Warman:

Ministers engage with the US and other partners on a regular basis on a wide range of economic and security issues. The Government has a shared understanding of the threat and the same overall objectives as our closest allies: raising global telecoms security standards and diversity of suppliers. The Government will continue to work closely with its allies on a number of issues, including telecoms security.

■ Internet: Safety

Chi Onwurah:

[\[74569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with online platforms on ensuring they take urgent steps to tackle online consumer harm.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government works closely with online platforms on a range of issues. The Competition and Markets Authority enforces consumer protection law online. The Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of BEIS, leads the government's work on product safety, including the sale of products online.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[75287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with online platforms on ensuring that they swiftly deal with online consumer harm.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government works closely with online platforms on a range of issues. The Competition and Markets Authority enforces consumer protection law online. The Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of BEIS, leads the government's work on product safety, including the sale of products online.

■ Music: Coronavirus**Mr William Wragg:**[\[72969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timescale is for allowing amateur brass bands to resume rehearsals and perform during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

We are committed to getting the performing arts sector fully back up and running as soon as it is safe to do so. It is a priority of my department to work with the arts and cultural sectors to address the challenges of reopening. We have released guidance to support the performing arts sector resume activity in line with the roadmap announced by the Secretary of State last month.

Playing wind and brass instruments, especially in groups, are considered higher risk activities because of the potential for aerosol production and the absence presently of developed scientific analysis to assess this specific risk. The evidence is being developed rapidly. Whilst further evidence is being developed, we advise that non-professional groups should not play brass instruments at this stage and should only do activities in line with government guidance on social mixing.

■ National Lottery Heritage Fund: Nature Conservation**Olivia Blake:**[\[76130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of natural heritage organisations being ineligible for National Lottery funding on biodiversity and conservation.

Nigel Huddleston:

Natural heritage organisations are eligible for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Since its inception in 1994, the Fund has awarded grants to nearly 4000 land and biodiversity projects, totalling over £1.78 billion.

On 17th July 2020, the Fund announced that grants of £1.19 million have helped to keep Wildlife Trusts in England and Wales open throughout lockdown, providing vital safe spaces for people to get outdoors, exercise and enjoy nature. This includes many grants to projects aimed at biodiversity and conservation, such as a grant of £49,700 to the Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust.

Natural heritage organisations are also welcome to apply to the Heritage Emergency Fund, a £50million funding support package launched by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help organisations in stabilising their operations and managing risks to heritage during the Covid-19 crisis.

■ National Lottery: Coronavirus

Barbara Keeley:

[75996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with Arts Council England on the payment of open access National Lottery Project Grants during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

Myself and my officials have worked closely with its arm's-length bodies throughout the COVID-19 crisis to deliver tailored support packages at speed, including the £160m Emergency Funding Package announced by Arts Council England (ACE) in March.

DCMS will continue to support ACE in its hugely important role in supporting and developing England's arts and culture, including in its upcoming role in the delivery of the £1.57 billion of new funding announced on 5 July, to provide support for key organisations across the cultural, heritage and creative sectors.

On 22 July ACE's National Lottery Project Grants re-open and further guidance, updated so more individuals and creative practitioners can be supported during COVID-19, can be found on the ACE website.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Kerry McCarthy:

[69484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to permit the resumption of amateur sporting activities as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased; and what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the safety of those participants.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. As announced on 9 July, from 25 July indoor gyms, leisure centres (including tennis courts) and swimming pools in England should be able to reopen. These facilities will be able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance.

The updated guidance can be found at the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website and includes advice for providers of pool, gym and leisure facilities on cleaning, social distancing, and protection for staff to help venues get back up and running safely.

■ Telecommunications

Chi Onwurah:

[73823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his oral statement of 14 July 2020 on UK Telecommunications, what risk assessment his Department (a) made and (b) received on the potential effect of allowing use of Huawei technology in the (a) 2G, (b) 3G and (c) 4G networks; and whether the short technical

consultation with operators to understand their supply chain alternatives will involve such a risk assessment.

Matt Warman:

The details of Huawei's entry into the UK market and associated decision making were subject of an inquiry by the Intelligence and Security Committee into 'Foreign involvement in the Critical National Infrastructure - The implications for national security'. The findings of which were published in June 2013 followed by the government response in July 2013.

The position for legacy networks has not changed, our world class mitigation arrangements will remain in place and we will continue to work with operators to mitigate risks. Huawei's current operations in the UK are subject to the strongest oversight possible through the Huawei Cyber Security Evaluation Centre and Oversight Board. The recent US sanctions impact future Huawei equipment - including 5G, full fibre and beyond.

The technical consultation announced as part of the oral statement on 14 July applies to full fibre only.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[73824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his oral statement of 14 July 2020 on UK Telecommunications, what estimate he has made of the amount of the £2 billion cost of requiring operators to remove Huawei equipment from their 5G networks by 2027 will be spent with British companies; and what estimate he has made of the potential number of jobs that will be created as a result of that spending.

Matt Warman:

The Secretary of State set out in his statement of 14 July on 'UK Telecommunications' that removing Huawei equipment from the UK's 5G networks could cost up to £2 billion. This figure is an estimate of the additional costs to operators of removing Huawei equipment from their 5G networks. These costs will vary across the different mobile operators. The process for complying with the Government's decision will include commercial decisions that are for the mobile operators to make.

EDUCATION

■ **Boarding Schools: Coronavirus**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[73972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he made of the financial effect of covid-secure measures on the ability of state boarding schools to fully reopen.

Nick Gibb:

We recognise the significant impact that this period has had on state boarding schools, many of which have been coming to terms with the additional challenge of reductions in boarding fee income over this period.

The Government's guidance for the full opening of schools provides advice for the range of school settings, including boarding schools. As stated in the guidance, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements to welcome all children back for the autumn. There are no plans at present to reimburse additional costs incurred as part of that process.

We have taken steps to ensure boarding schools can receive as much support as possible to meet the financial challenges they may be facing. This includes the potential to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, accessed through guidance on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>.

A temporary measure has also been agreed that enables academy trusts to apply to the Education & Skills Funding Agency to use their general unrestricted reserves to support boarding provision in response to these unprecedented circumstances. In the case of maintained schools, schools should discuss with their local authority to make sure their use of unrestricted reserves complies with the local authority's accounting requirements.

Guidance on opening schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

■ Childminding**Tulip Siddiq:****[73925]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on ensuring that GPs complete health declaration forms required for people applying to set up childminding businesses.

Vicky Ford:

To apply to register as a childminder with Ofsted, individuals must have a completed health declaration form which includes a signed statement from their GP to confirm their physical and mental suitability. Prospective childminders should contact their GP surgery to confirm the process for obtaining a signed statement from their GP.

Information about applying to register as a childminder, including the health declaration form, is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-register-as-a-childminder#before-you-start>.

Details about the health declaration form are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-and-childrens-social-care-health-declaration-form>.

■ Children: Coronavirus**Caroline Nokes:****[73807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what research his Department has undertaken on the effect of social distancing on the emotional well-being of children.

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 mental health and wellbeing and identify the children and young people that need help and will continue to do so as pupils return to school.

The return to school is a key part of supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, as in addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity, attendance at school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return. 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 have been working closely with partners to provide resources and 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>.

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. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

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

All NHS mental health trusts have been asked to ensure that there are 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. 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 are available here:

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

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

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

Caroline Nokes:

[73808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons his Department's Guidance for full opening: schools, published on 2 July 2020, states that social distancing for the youngest children is not mandatory.

Caroline Nokes:

[73809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the advice that social distancing for the youngest children is not mandatory in his Department's Guidance for full opening: schools, published on 2 July 2020, whether any primary schools require young children to socially distance.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has been clear that our intention is for all children to return to school from September. On 2 July we published guidance to help schools prepare for this.

As part of this guidance, we are asking all headteachers to put measures in place to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in their school. This includes implementing a Public Health England endorsed system of controls that includes: ensuring that people who have symptoms do not attend school, robust hand and respiratory hygiene, enhanced cleaning arrangements, active engagement with NHS Test and Trace, and minimising contact and maintaining distance between individuals wherever possible.

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of COVID-19. This is important in all contexts, and schools must consider how to implement this. The overarching principle that schools have been asked to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on children's ability to distance, the lay out of the school and the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary).

At primary school, and in the younger years at secondary (key stage 3), schools may be able to implement smaller groups the size of a full class. If that can be achieved, it is recommended, as this will help to reduce the number of people who could be

asked to isolate should someone in a group become ill with COVID-19. We recognise that younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing, and it is acceptable for them not to distance within their group but primary schools are expected to keep groups separate.

The Department's guidance on fully opening schools can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-1-public-health-advice-to-minimise-coronavirus-covid-19-risks>.

■ Children: Mental Health

Mick Whitley:

[73961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of support for children's mental health and well-being on levels of academic attainment.

Vicky Ford:

We know that children and young people's mental health and wellbeing are associated with their educational attainment and other long-term outcomes. That is why we are committed to support schools in promoting good mental wellbeing and ensuring that children and young people get the help and support they need, with the right support from specialist services.

The return to school is a vital factor in supporting the mental wellbeing of pupils, in addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity, attendance at school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return.

We have 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 pupils, rebuild social interaction with their friends and teachers and provide a sound basis for academic catch-up. 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>.

The government has sent a clear message that NHS mental health services remain open, and we have recently provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. This includes a number of programmes which specifically support the mental health of children and young people, and all NHS mental health trusts are providing 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages.

For the longer term, we remain committed to delivering our joint green paper programme with the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, including introducing new mental health support teams (MHSTs), and testing approaches to deliver four week waiting times for access to NHS support. One of the

core functions of the MHSTs will be giving timely advice to school and college staff, and liaising with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support, stay in education and achieve to their potential.

■ Children: Social Services

Tulip Siddiq: [76078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authority children's services will have adequate resources to manage any increase in demand for their support in autumn 2020.

Vicky Ford:

The government announced at the Local Government Finance Settlement that English councils' core spending power is rising by over £2.9 billion this financial year. This includes £1 billion of new grant funding that can be used flexibly by local authorities to deliver adult and children's social care services. Further to this, the government has provided £3.7 billion of additional funding to support local authorities to meet COVID-19 related pressures, including in children's services.

We will continue to work closely with local authorities as the COVID-19 outbreak progresses.

■ Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund

Margaret Greenwood: [76049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to ensure that the £1bn 'catch-up' funding will be distributed to support students who most need assistance.

Nick Gibb:

Children and young people across the country have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of COVID-19. That is why the Government has announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up.

This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch up premium for the 2020/21 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. Though funding has been calculated on a per pupil or per place basis, schools should use the sum available to them as a single total from which to prioritise support for pupils according to their need. On 20 July, the Department published further guidance which outlined that, through the catch up premium, a 1,000 pupil secondary school will receive £80,000 and a 200 pupil primary school will receive £16,000. The guidance is clear that schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances. To support schools to make best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 Support Guide for Schools with evidence based approaches to catch up for all students:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/#nav-covid-19-support-guide-for-schools1>.

Although all children have had their education disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak, it is likely that disadvantaged and vulnerable groups will have been hardest hit. That is why, alongside the universal catch up premium, the Government has announced a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help. The programme will comprise of two parts in the 2020/21 academic year. For 5 to 16 year olds, the programme will make high quality tuition available to 5 to 16 year olds in state-funded primary and secondary schools from the second half of autumn term 2020. The programme will be highly subsidised, and schools will be able to use their additional catch-up premium funding to pay for the remainder of the cost. For 16 to 19 year olds, funding will be available for school sixth forms, colleges and all other 16 to 19 providers to provide small group tutoring activity for disadvantaged students whose studies have been disrupted as a result of COVID-19.

■ Extended Services: Coronavirus

Caroline Nokes:

[73810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the non-resumption of breakfast and after-school provision on working (a) parents and (b) mothers.

Vicky Ford:

As of 4 July, all providers offering wraparound care, holiday clubs and out-of-school activities for children have been able to open for both indoor and outdoor provision with safety measures in place. We have published guidance for providers of these activities on the measures they should put in place to ensure they are operating as safely as possible, which is available here:

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

We recognise that breakfast and after-school provision are important sources of additional childcare for parents and carers, particularly those who may need to return to, or continue to, work in the autumn term.

Therefore, as outlined in the guidance for full opening of schools published by the department, schools should consider resuming any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term to support working parents and to help children and young people re-engage with their peers and with the school. We recognise that schools may need to respond flexibly and build this up over time. The guidance is available here:

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

■ Further Education: EU Nationals

Stephen Hammond:

[\[73762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether EU nationals who hold (a) settled and (b) pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and start a foundation diploma in academic year 2020-21 will remain eligible for (i) the home rate of tuition fees and (ii) access to student finance when they progress to a higher education course in academic year 2021-22.

Michelle Donelan:

We have agreed with the EU that current EU principles of equal treatment will continue to apply for those covered by the citizens' rights provisions in the Withdrawal Agreement. This means that EU nationals resident in the UK before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 will be eligible for support on a similar basis to domestic students.

Those EU nationals with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and who meet the relevant eligibility requirements in force at the time of course commencement will have access to home fee status and student financial support.

■ GCE A-level and GCSE

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[76051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential benefit of a greater use of coursework in the awarding of (a) GCSEs, (b) AS Levels and (c) A Levels in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for the Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. I have asked its Chief Regulator, Sally Collier, to write directly to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Higher Education

Ian Mearns:

[\[73798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to tackle the issue identified in his speech to the Social Market Foundation of 9 July 2020 that participation in undergraduate part-time study in higher education has fallen significantly.

Michelle Donelan:

The government recognises the importance of studying part-time and the benefits it can bring to individuals, employers and the wider economy.

In recent years we have already made a number of changes to support part-time and mature learners. Students starting to attend a part-time degree level course from 1 August 2018 onwards are able to access full-time equivalent maintenance loans. We have removed the "equivalent or lower qualification" restrictions for all STEM part-time degree courses. Students on these courses who already hold a degree can now

access support through student loans. We have also supported higher education providers to offer part-time provision.

We have also made funding available through the Teaching Grant to providers to recognise the additional costs of part-time study. In the academic year 2020/21, £66 million will be made available for this.

These changes have resulted in us reversing the decline in part-time undergraduates. Over the last two years we have seen an increase in the number of entrants to part-time undergraduate degree level study at English higher education providers (it has increased from 33,980 in 2016/17 to 40,095 in 2018/19).

The Independent Panel set up to provide input into the Review of Post 18 Education and Funding considered different ways to support learners who want to study higher education more flexibly. The government is considering the Independent Panel's report carefully but have not yet taken decisions with regards to the recommendations put forward. The government will conclude the review alongside the next Spending Review.

■ Oak National Academy: Finance

Matt Western:

[73940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what Government funding has been allocated to Oak National Academy to provide online learning resources and digital lessons; and for what period of time that funding has been so allocated.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has made £4.84 million available for the Oak National Academy for the summer term of this academic year and for the 2020-21 academic year to provide video lessons for Reception up to year 11.

The purpose of this funding is to enable Oak to provide support to schools in developing the ability to switch from classroom teaching to remote provision immediately in case of local lockdowns or self-isolation. This is time-limited funding which is being made available to Oak National Academy as an emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak and recovery period.

We have also published an updated list of high quality online educational resources, which have been assessed with the support of some of the country's leading educational subject experts to help pupils to learn at home while they may not be able to attend their normal setting. The list includes resources in six priority areas including maths, English, science, PE, mental wellbeing and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), from early years to key stage 5, and which are currently available for free.

Resources published can be found using the link:

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

■ Outdoor Education: Coronavirus

Duncan Baker:

[74754]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to support independent field study centres until 2020 due to the cancellation of residential field trips during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The government has issued guidance on the financial support for businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19). This can be viewed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Charity Commission has also issued coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for the charity sector, including considerations and practical steps that charities can take when they are facing serious financial difficulties. This can be viewed at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector>.

The Department for Education continues to advise against both overnight and non-overnight domestic (UK) and overseas educational visits as outlined in the coronavirus travel guidance for educational settings.

In the autumn term, schools can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. All such visits should be compliant with COVID-19 guidelines and subject to a thorough and ongoing assessment of the risks to ensure that they can be undertaken safely. Schools should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering any visit.

The above guidance will remain under review, including the position on overnight domestic visits, and will be updated in line with guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for Transport and Public Health England.

The coronavirus: travel guidance for educational settings can be viewed at:

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

Guidance for full opening: schools is available at:

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

Guidance on health and safety on educational visits can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>.

■ Religion: Education

Yasmin Qureshi:

[75997]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what level of religious education is legally required to have been achieved by the time a student reaches 16 at (a) maintained and (b) academic schools.

Nick Gibb:

State-funded schools in England have a duty to teach religious education (RE) to all pupils aged 5 to 18. While academies, free schools and most maintained schools designated as having a religious character may design and follow their own curriculum, all other maintained schools must follow their area's locally agreed syllabus for RE.

A locally agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and may include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages. Legislation requires that every agreed syllabus must reflect 'that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

Neither legislation nor academies' funding agreements prescribe how much time should be devoted to RE or how it should be provided. However, we would expect an academy to have a plan or scheme of work which demonstrates how provision across the year groups is structured to ensure that all pupils receive RE which matches the legal requirement for an agreed syllabus as set out above.

Although not mandatory for all schools, teaching an accredited religious studies qualification at key stage 4 may be required by a locally agreed syllabus; and many schools teach the religious studies GCSE. The Department has set out the educational outcomes and content coverage required for GCSE specifications in this subject, which can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-religious-studies. Where key stage 4 pupils do not take a religious studies qualification, the requirement to teach religious education still applies.

Department for Education guidance on religious education for maintained schools is at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010 ; and for academies and free schools at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools/religious-education-re-and-collective-worship-in-academies-and-free-schools.

Schools: Air Pollution**Geraint Davies:****[73697]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to issue an update of the Building Bulletin 101: 'Guidelines on ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality in schools for (a) BS EN ISO 16890:2016, (b) BS EN ISO 10121-2:2013 and (c) BS EN 16798-3:2017.

Nick Gibb:

The design and construction standards for new school buildings are under regular review to reflect any changes in regulations or best practice nationally. There are no plans at present to update Building Bulletin 101 'Guidelines on ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality in schools' which was published in 2019.

We published guidance on 3 June on the reopening of buildings and campuses to help providers make informed decisions about their provision in ways that protect the health and well-being of both staff and students. Our guidance contains links to other sources of relevant advice, including on safer workplaces:

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

■ Schools: Attendance

Daisy Cooper:

[73968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many school attendance officers there are; and if he will publish that data by local education authority.

Nick Gibb:

Local authorities employ staff to manage their attendance services and fulfil their statutory responsibilities, but the Government does not collect data on the number of such officers.

Attendance officers are also employed directly by schools and academy trusts to help improve pupil attendance. In November 2019, the Department recorded the total number of attendance officers directly employed by state-funded schools in England as 2,982. A breakdown of this figure by local authority area is attached, for reference. This figure does not include attendance support through contracted services, those not directly employed by the school or those employed by local authorities. Schools also employ other professionals to improve attendance including pastoral managers, education welfare officers and home-school liaison officers, which are also not counted in this figure.

Attachments:

1. 73968_Attendance_Officers_employed_by_state-funded [73698_Table.xls]

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[73971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the economic effect of covid-secure measures on state schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has been clear that our plan is for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term and on 2 July we published guidance to help schools prepare for this. The guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Schools have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

Schools have also been able to claim additional funding for specific exceptional costs incurred due to COVID-19 between March and July 2020, such as additional cleaning required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases and increased premises costs to keep schools open for priority groups during the Easter and summer half term holidays.

We do not consider it necessary for schools to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children back to school in the autumn. Following a risk assessment, some schools may determine that small adaptations to their site are required. This will be at the discretion of individual schools, based on their particular circumstances. As such, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements to welcome all children back.

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[74022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his 15 June 2020 guidance for secondary school provision, what the face to face check will consist of; how that check will be standardised and accredited; and what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) those carrying out that check are appropriately trained and registered through an independent Government-approved agency, (b) actions as a result of the check align with Government guidance and include adequate help and support to families and (c) all matters relating to that check are transparent, subject to Ofsted inspection and publicly funded.

Nick Gibb:

The guidance for secondary school provision from 15 June 2020 was issued to support schools in England to welcome back pupils from eligible year groups. This can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-schools-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-secondary-schools>.

From 15 June, secondary schools in England have been able to invite year 10 and 12 pupils (years 10 and 11 for alternative provision schools) back into school for some face-to-face support with their teachers, to supplement their remote education. This is alongside vulnerable children and the children of critical workers who have been able to attend school throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Whilst secondary schools have been unable to welcome back additional year groups, they have had the flexibility to invite pupils in other year groups in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of this term, where it would be beneficial. We have asked schools to ensure this happens in line with wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of pupils permitted on-site at any one time.

Schools have the flexibility to implement this support in the way that best suits their circumstances, including considerations around staff availability, expertise and workload. It is up to schools to decide how they want to use face-to-face support in the best interests of their pupils (e.g. additional pastoral support, academic support, practical support, or a combination of these) and which staff are best placed to provide it.

Ofsted's routine school inspections are suspended at this time to enable schools to focus entirely on the immediate challenge of supporting pupils for the remainder of

this term and preparing for a full return of pupils from September. Ofsted will not therefore be assessing the face-to-face support being provided by schools during this period. As set out in the Government's guidance on the full opening of schools, published on 2 July, Ofsted will conduct a programme of non-graded visits to a sample of schools in the autumn to discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their pupils. This guidance can be viewed at:

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

It is intended that routine Ofsted inspections will restart from January 2021, with the exact timing being kept under review.

Caroline Lucas:

[74488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish a strategy for schools setting out his plan for pupils in the event of (a) local and (b) national lockdown to prevent the transmission of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has been clear that our intention is for all children to return to school from September. On 2 July we published guidance to help schools prepare for this, including advice for contingency planning in the event of a lockdown.

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that is resulting in localised community spread, appropriate authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread. The Department will be involved in decisions at a local and national level affecting a geographical area and will support appropriate authorities and individual settings to follow the health advice. In the event of a local outbreak, the Public Health England health protection team or local authority may advise a school or number of schools to close temporarily to help control transmission.

Schools are expected to have a contingency plan in place for this eventuality. This may involve a return to remaining open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers and providing remote education for all other pupils. The Department has issued guidance and best practice on remote education and is working with Oak National Academy and others to provide further support. This guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

A 'COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers' has been published which sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks. This can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>.

Margaret Greenwood:

[76046]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with school leaders on providing financial support for expenses incurred following the covid-19

outbreak on (a) additional cleaning, (b) signage, and (c) any other anticipated extra costs that they expect to incur from September 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has been clear that our plan is for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term and on 2 July we published guidance to help schools prepare for this. The measures set out in this guidance provide a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff, including information on cleaning and workforce.

Schools have continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

We do not consider it necessary for schools to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children back to school in the autumn. Following a risk assessment, some schools may determine that small adaptations to their site are required. This will be at the discretion of individual schools, based on their particular circumstances. As such, schools should use their existing resources when making arrangements to welcome all children back.

■ **Schools: Mental Health Services**

Mick Whitley:

[\[73963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of (a) trained personnel and (b) funding allocated to schools to provide mental health services to BAME children and young people when they return to school in September 2020.

Vicky Ford:

The return to school is a vital factor in supporting the mental wellbeing of pupils, in addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity, attendance at school allows social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. To support this, we have encouraged schools to focus on mental wellbeing as pupils return.

Schools will need to reflect the particular circumstances of their pupils in deciding how to do this. They may wish to provide particular groups of pupils with specific support, including some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupils, given the disproportionate rates of COVID-19 diagnoses and death rates among Black and Asian ethnic groups. There are also emerging indications of the potential for greater mental health and wellbeing impacts on children and young people from BAME groups.

Funding for pastoral support is part of schools' core funding, which is rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20 funding levels. The government has also announced an additional £650

million 'catch up' premium, as part of our wider £1 billion COVID catch-up package, to be shared across all 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.

The department has 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 (RSHE) 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>.

The department hosted a free webinar for schools on 7 July on delivering the new RSHE curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including supporting their mental wellbeing. The recorded webinar is available, free of charge, on the PSHE Association's website here: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/content/send-hub>.

However, teachers are not mental health professionals and some pupils will need support from specialist services. The government has sent a clear message that NHS mental health services remain open, and we have recently provided over £9 million to leading mental health charities to help them expand and reach those most in need. This includes a number of programmes which specifically support the mental health of children and young people, and all NHS mental health trusts are providing 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages.

■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[72177]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timeframe is for the restarting of in-person tutoring for people with Special Educational Needs as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

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.

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, informed by

their risk assessments. 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.

The department has now published detailed plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education from September. 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 special educational needs and disabilities in both mainstream and special educational settings.

The guidance for special educational settings is available 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>.

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to the continued decline in the rates of community transmission of COVID-19, which will mean that pupils and students on the shielded patient list can return to their educational setting in September. For those currently identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, decisions about returning to school in September should be based on a consultation with their paediatric specialist or GP. Further advice on shielding is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-young-people-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-most-likely-to-become-unwell-if-they-catch-coronavirus#understanding-the-clinical-risk-to-children-and-young-people>.

Guidance on shielding from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is available here: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-shielding-guidance-children-young-people#frequently-asked-questions-on-shielding>.

Where a pupil is unable to attend their setting because they are complying with clinical or public health advice, we expect settings to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education.

Since May, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, it has been necessary to modify Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 so that local authorities and health commissioners must use their 'reasonable endeavours' to secure or arrange the specified special educational health care provision in EHC plans. We are committed to removing these flexibilities as soon as possible so that children and young people can receive the support they need to return to school. As such, unless the evidence changes, we will not be issuing further national notices to modify the EHC duties but will consider whether any such flexibilities may be required locally to respond to outbreaks.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Fisheries: Quotas****Sarah Owen:**[\[73977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to redistribute a greater proportion of the UK's fishing quota to under 10 metre vessels and UK-owned sustainable fishing fleets; and what steps he will take to prevent overfishing by large fleets after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The allocation of quota to the fishing industry is a devolved matter. In England, our policy is set out in the 2018 White Paper, Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations. This explains that we will continue to allocate our existing share of quota in the same way. This provides certainty for the fishing industry. However, we also said we would develop and trial new methods for allocating any additional quota we secure after leaving the Common Fisheries Policy. In England, we are working with industry and other stakeholders to do this in a way which benefits the whole fleet, including under 10 metre vessels.

The fisheries objectives set out in the Fisheries Bill, along with the legally binding Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans, collectively reaffirm our commitment to achieving sustainable fishing and protecting the marine environment. In addition, all foreign vessels granted access to fish in UK waters following the Transition Period will need to abide by UK rules including those on sustainability.

■ Food: Coronavirus**Alex Cunningham:**[\[76011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the £63 million allocated for the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies announced on 10 June 2020, (a) on what basis was the £63 million calculated, (b) when he will publish allocations for each local authority, and (c) whether he will conduct a review to assess whether further funding is necessary.

Victoria Prentis:

The Emergency Assistance Grant Scheme was created as a one off fund to enable Local Authorities to support those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. The £63 million was calculated on the basis of the cost of supporting the 'most at risk' groups for a notional period of 12 weeks, based on an estimated net household budget shortfall. I intend to publish the allocations for each local authority as soon as possible, after the authorities have accepted their grant offers. We will monitor the use of the funding over the coming months.

■ Furs: Imports

Mick Whitley:

[\[73960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on the level of global wildlife trade of UK imports of real fur for commercial sale.

Victoria Prentis:

The global fur trade is estimated to be worth in excess of around £24 billion per year with the value of fur imports into the UK estimated at £63 million in 2017, of which £17 million was raw or untanned fur. It should be noted that these figures do not distinguish between fur derived from wildlife and that of farmed animals, and the global figure is subject to a degree of uncertainty.

■ Game: Coronavirus

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[73866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many game rearing businesses have applied to the Government for financial assistance during the covid-19 outbreak; and how much funding from the public purse has been allocated to help protect that industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Game-rearing businesses play an important role in our rural economy. As with other businesses they have, where eligible, been able to apply for public support through the various Covid-19-related Government schemes including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business rates relief, the Coronavirus [Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. Defra does not hold a record of the nature of businesses applying for these schemes and is therefore unable to provide details of the number of game-rearing businesses in receipt of support and the amounts paid from the public purse.

■ Partridges: Animal Welfare

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[73868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to establish welfare outcomes for breeding partridges farmed in metal cages; what his policy is on the amount of time that a partridge can be kept caged without compromising its welfare; and if he will make a statement.

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[73869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the mortality rate is on game farms for (a) pheasants and (b) partridges used for breeding purposes; and what the mortality rate is on game farms for the offspring of those pheasants and partridges.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare and is examining the evidence around the use of cages in farming, including their use for breeding partridges and pheasants. We are exploring the options and will work with the industry to improve animal welfare in a sustainable way.

The welfare of gamebirds is currently protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering. This is backed up by the statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes, which recommends that barren cages should not be used for breeding birds and that any system should be appropriately enriched. Keepers are required by law to have access to, and be familiar with this code, which encourages the adoption of high standards of husbandry. Failure to observe the provisions of a code may also be used in support of a prosecution.

Defra does not hold information on mortality rates for breeding pheasants and partridges or their offspring.

Seas and Oceans: Acidification**Sarah Owen:**[\[73976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the effect of ocean acidification; and what progress has been made in implementing the recommendations from the Ocean Acidification Research Programme.

Rebecca Pow:

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate has stated, increasing emissions of carbon dioxide will result in greater levels of ocean acidification. The most effective way to reduce the impacts of climate change and acidification on our ocean is to reduce emissions. The UK Government has therefore set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

From 2010-16, Defra partnered with the Natural Environment Research Council and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to invest £12.4 million in the UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme. This programme provided baseline data on ocean acidification for UK seas and supported the development of long-term monitoring strategies. The outputs from this ground-breaking initiative contributed evidence which has fed into the cross-Government Climate Change Adaptation programme and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 5th Assessment Report. The UK has also supported the inclusion of ocean acidification monitoring in the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and through other international policy initiatives.

In 2018, building on the UK Ocean Acidification programme, Defra's Science Advisory Council reviewed the national monitoring and assessment programmes for

ocean acidification and provided advice on where the UK could contribute to global monitoring. As a result of this we have now established the North East Atlantic Ocean Acidification Hub in the UK which forms part of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network. This Defra-funded hub acts as the European regional centre on monitoring and research. An Ocean Acidification Hub workshop was held in London in 2019 to foster collaboration and share information on ocean acidification monitoring and modelling across communities, to encourage and ease the data-submission process via the Global Ocean Acidification Portal, promote best practices and build capacity for further training.

We also recognise the importance of global research collaboration and have joined the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Ocean Acidification, sharing our knowledge and science with our international partners.

■ Slaughterhouses: Rural Areas

Bob Seely:

[\[73955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Agriculture Bill, what assessment he has made of the importance of small, mobile abattoirs to rural or isolated communities.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government supports a competitive agri-food supply chain that provides opportunities for all businesses, including farmers, processors and abattoirs. We are working across government, with industry and stakeholders to ensure that the UK maintains its high-quality slaughtering facilities within a robust and competitive market providing options for farmers particularly in rural and isolated communities and reducing animal welfare impacts.

The Food Standards Agency is working closely with a business in England who are looking to introduce a mobile slaughter unit which will service local suppliers and support the rural economy. If this model can meet regulatory requirements and is deemed viable it could be replicated in other parts of the country where facilities for slaughter are in decline.

■ Water: Conservation

Luke Pollard:

[\[73956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of funding water efficiency measures prior to the announcement of £2 billion to support homeowners and landlords in making their homes more energy-efficient in 2020-21 in the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs.

Rebecca Pow:

In his Summer Economic Update, the Chancellor announced a £2 billion Green Home Grant scheme that will support homeowners and landlords in England to

improve the energy efficiency of their properties, reducing energy bills and carbon emissions, and supporting a green economic recovery.

The funding will be spent on paying for accredited tradespeople to install a range of measures, for example insulation, to improve the energy performance of their homes. Further detail on measures will be announced in the coming days, before the full launch.

The Secretary of State for Defra has not had a specific conversation with the SoS for BEIS about funding water efficiency measures through the Green Home Grant scheme. The Government intends to publish its response to the *Measures to reduce personal water consumption* consultation before the end of 2020. This will set out the next steps for water efficiency in England.

■ Welsh Water

Bill Wiggin:

[73730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has held with representatives of Welsh Water on the timeframe for that company's upgrading of its sewage works to remove phosphates.

Rebecca Pow:

Since 2001, all large Welsh Water sewage treatment works in the English part of the Wye catchment have had specific treatment technology in place to reduce the level of phosphorus discharged to the receiving water.

Regular discussions take place between Welsh Water and the Environment Agency on the issue of phosphorus, and additional work is planned as part of this water industry investment period (2020 to 2025) to further reduce the level of phosphorus discharged to the Wye catchment.

Across the country, improvements made to sewage treatment works have helped to achieve a 61% reduction in the amount of phosphorus discharged from sewage treatment works since 1995.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[76101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK residents stranded abroad as a result of the covid-19 pandemic who registered for UK Government charter flights returned home by other means.

Nigel Adams:

Helping British travellers who need and want to return to the UK is one of the Government's highest priorities. Since the outbreak in Wuhan, we estimate that over 1.3 million people have returned to the UK via commercial routes - the majority supported by our work to keep vital routes open. We have brought home over 38,000

people on 186 special charter flights organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, from 57 countries and territories, as well as working to repatriate over 19,000 people from cruise ships.

■ **Gambia: Politics and Government**

Andrew Rosindell:

[73740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Gambian counterpart on ensuring that British-Gambian citizens voices are heard by the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government welcomes the establishment of the independent Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) to gather information about human rights violations which took place under the presidency of Yahya Jammeh. The UK has provided £75,000 through the International Centre for Transitional Justice for an outreach programme to raise awareness and promote engagement. Our High Commissioner in Banjul regularly meets with TRRC officials and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office hosted the TRRC Vice Chair and officials in London last year. The TRRC has invited contributions from all those who may have been victims, perpetrators or witnesses to human rights violations between July 1992 and January 2017. We would encourage British-Gambians to submit their personal accounts via the TRRC website: www.trrc.gm.

Andrew Rosindell:

[73741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Gambian counterpart on help the UK Government can provide to assist with the transitional justice process in the Gambia.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government welcomes the commitment of President Barrow and the Government of The Gambia to embrace change by drafting a new Gambian Constitution which has a human rights based approach to development, with freedom of expression, freedom of association and media freedom at its heart. We regularly discuss the transitional justice process with the Government of The Gambia and through a DFID programme, delivered by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, we are working to transform the National Assembly of The Gambia into a robust institution. This includes a particular focus on increasing government accountability and enhancing political inclusion among marginalised groups. Furthermore the UK Government provided funding to the Bingham Centre For The Rule of Law to conduct a comprehensive review of the draft constitution and provide recommendations in line with international best practice to the Constitutional Review Commission. We have also provided strategic-level support to the Gambian Ministry of Justice by funding a Special Adviser who co-chairs the transitional justice process, including the implementation of judicial and constitutional reforms necessary to

underpin the broader democratic reform agenda. We will continue to support The Gambia to resolve the challenges still to be addressed so that the human rights of all its citizens are respected and protected.

■ **India: Coronavirus**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[76098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK residents stranded abroad in India as a result of the covid-19 pandemic registered with his Department for flights to return to the UK by the deadline of 19 April 2020.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[76102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of UK residents stranded in India as a result of the covid-19 pandemic who registered for charter flights with his Department but remain in India.

Nigel Adams:

Repatriations from India is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with both airlines and the Government of India to ensure British travellers can return home. We have brought nearly 18,000 people back to the UK on 66 chartered flights from India, including some foreign nationals with Indefinite Leave to Remain where seats were available. These carried almost all of those in India who registered, were eligible, and took up the option of a flight when given the chance to do so. Since then, thousands of people, including British nationals, have been able to make use of outbound legs of Air India's "Vande Bharat" repatriation flights to return to the UK, as well as the increasing number of other flight options out of the country.

It is extremely difficult to be precise about numbers: we do not require British travellers to register with us when they go overseas or report their return to the UK via other means, while there were instances of multiple registrations by the same individual and other who were not eligible.

We continue to assess the need for any future flights and are in contact with airlines, the Indian authorities, and other governments to maximise options for returning to the UK. For any British travellers who are unable to do so, support is provided by our consular teams in India.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[76099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 April 2020 to Question 38493 on India: Coronavirus, if he will provide an update on the number of UK residents stranded abroad in Punjab, India as a result of the covid-19 pandemic who registered with his Department for flights to return to the UK.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[76100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK residents stranded abroad as a result of the covid-19 pandemic who were located in Punjab, India have returned home on UK Government charter flights.

Nigel Adams:

India is a priority for the UK Government and we have been working closely with both airlines and the Government of India to ensure British travellers can return home.

We have brought nearly 18,000 people back to the UK on 66 chartered flights from India, including from New Delhi, Goa, Mumbai, and other areas of the Punjab, Gujarat and West Bengal. These flights carried almost all of those in India who registered, were eligible, and took up a flight when given the chance to do so. We estimate that of these, over 8,000 people returned from the Punjab on 29 charter flights between 13 April and 4 June.

Since then, thousands of people, including British nationals, have been able to make use of outbound legs of Air India's "Vande Bharat" repatriation flights to return to the UK, as well as the increasing number of other flight options out of the country. It is extremely difficult to be precise about numbers: we do not require British travellers to register with us when they go overseas or report their return to the UK via other means, while there were instances of multiple registrations by the same individual and other who were not eligible.

We continue to assess the need for any future flights and are in contact with airlines, the Indian authorities, and other governments to maximise options for returning to the UK. For any British travellers who are unable to do so, support is provided by our consular teams in India.

Istanbul: Religious Buildings**Theresa Villiers:**[\[72837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his Turkish counterpart to express the Government's opposition to turning Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

Wendy Morton:

We have noted President Erdoğan's decision to turn Hagia Sophia into a mosque. While we note the concern this action has caused internationally, the Government regards this as a sovereign matter for Turkey. We have therefore not discussed the matter with other countries or organisations. However, we would expect that Hagia Sophia - part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site - remains accessible to all, as testament to Turkey's rich and diverse historical and cultural legacy, and that its precious artefacts are preserved. We therefore welcome the public statements by Turkish leaders that this historic building will continue to be accessible to people of all faiths and nationalities.

Alexander Stafford:[\[73153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's policy is on the President of Turkey's proposal to designate the Hagia Sophia as a mosque.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[73154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the (a) EU, (b) UNESCO, (c) Turkey and (d) Greece on the Turkish Government's decision to convert the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[73155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take in response to the conversion of the Hagia Sophia to a mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[73156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking with his overseas counterparts to ensure that (a) the Hagia Sophia and (b) other UNESCO World Heritage Sites are not used for historical revisionism to promote (a) ideological, (b) nationalist and (c) political agendas.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[73157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with leaders of the (a) Greek Orthodox Church, (b) the Roman Catholic Church and (c) other Christian denominations affected by the Hagia Sophia's conversion to a mosque.

Wendy Morton:

We have noted President Erdoğan's decision to turn Hagia Sophia into a mosque. While we note the concern this action has caused internationally, the Government regards this as a sovereign matter for Turkey. We have therefore not discussed the matter with other countries or organisations. However, we would expect that Hagia Sophia - part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site - remains accessible to all, as testament to Turkey's rich and diverse historical and cultural legacy, and that its precious artefacts are preserved. We therefore welcome the public statements by Turkish leaders that this historic building will continue to be accessible to people of all faiths and nationalities.

■ Overseas Aid: Gender

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[75998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what proportion of his Department's aid was targeted to projects with gender equality as a (a) principal objective, (b) significant objective and (c) not-gender related in each of the last 5 years.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's Gender Equality Act 2014 (an amendment to 2002 International Development Act, IDA) requires all overseas development funding to consider the impact of how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality. The UK Aid Strategy prioritises the rights of women and girls under its fourth strategic goal of tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable. The FCO support a number of Official Development Assistance programmes targeted at promoting girls'

education, empowering women peacebuilders and supporting female survivors of sexual violence in conflict. The programmes include lobbying efforts encouraging foreign governments to prioritise girls' education reforms, financial support for women mediator organisations, capacity building programmes for female judges and women peacebuilders and consultations with survivors of sexual violence.

Additional information on the FCO's ODA programmes can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-fco-programme-spend>.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Autism

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [70280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government plans to publish its new Autism Strategy.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 13 July 2020]: We are fully committed to publishing an impactful autism strategy, which covers all ages. We expect to publish the refreshed strategy later this year subject to our response to COVID-19.

■ Businesses: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill: [67730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the legal basis is for implementing a local covid-19 lockdown; and what the consequences are for businesses if they do not comply with those lockdown restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: Part 2A the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 provides a legal basis to protect the public from threats arising from infectious disease and includes powers to impose restrictions or requirements on people and in relation to things and premises.

The provisions in the relevant regulations may be enforced by way of prohibition notices to be served on businesses or by creating criminal offences enforceable by issuing fixed penalty notices or imposing fines upon conviction.

■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing

Vicky Foxcroft: [52247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Alzheimer's Society research showing that 43 per cent of care homes are not fully confident in their supply of personal protective equipment, what plans he has to ensure the safety of and support for care home residents and workers.

Helen Whately:

During this unprecedented global outbreak, we have kept our social care guidance under constant review and have been working tirelessly with the sector to reduce transmission and save lives. The Government is fully committed to ensuring care homes feel confident in their personal protective equipment (PPE) supply. We are now confident in the stocks and sources of supply of PPE to meet the needs of health and social care over the next seven and 90 days.

More widely, we have set out a comprehensive action plan to support the adult social care sector throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. This has included £3.2 billion of funding for councils and providing millions of items of PPE.

■ Carers**Helen Hayes:**[\[64978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the (a) services and (b) support available to help informal carers care for their loved ones.

Helen Whately:

We recognise the crucial role unpaid carers play, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have published guidance for unpaid carers, which includes advice on infection control, and links to other information and support on caring for someone with symptoms. It is available on GOV.UK. Guidance to help young carers and young adult carers (aged under 25) is also available on GOV.UK. The guidance is designed to help them understand the changes they need to make and signposts to help and support available during the outbreak.

In addition, unpaid carers can continue to claim Carer's Allowance if they need to self-isolate. During the outbreak emotional support can also count towards the 35 hours a week Carer's Allowance care threshold.

We have also provided funding to extend Carers UK's information and advice service during the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to work closely with carers organisations to identify further solutions to support carers.

■ Carers: Coronavirus**Alex Sobel:**[\[71873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that sole carers can form support bubbles with households with more than one person.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

If people live with their carer, in other words are not single adult households, then they should only form an exclusive support bubble with a single adult household.

Households that are not in areas where local lockdown measures in place can meet

in groups of up to two households in any location or in any setting (or a household support bubble if they have one) and this includes staying overnight. This allows for people, including sole carers, to utilise their support network for a variety of reasons, although they should socially distance where possible and practical. When doing this they should take particular care to maintain excellent hygiene – washing hands and surfaces – when using shared facilities like bathrooms.

Guidance on meeting people from outside of your household has been published and can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household>

■ Carers: Quarantine

Debbie Abrahams: [67649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on exempting carers of people with disabilities who are (a) directly employed as a personal assistant and (b) employed through a care agency registered with the Care Quality Commission from the 14-day quarantine period upon arrival in the UK.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: These regulations and the exemptions are kept under constant review. The regulations make no exemption for direct care workers from the requirement to quarantine for 14 days.

Debbie Abrahams: [67651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether care workers who are carrying out essential work for disabled people, either working directly as a personal assistant or being introduced through a CQC-registered care agency, are exempt from quarantine when entering the UK.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 6 July 2020]: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 are clear in that they include an exemption for registered healthcare professionals from the requirement to quarantine, if they are required to return to, or start work within 14 days of arrival in the United Kingdom, if they are staying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Mr Gregory Campbell: [71675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policy on ME funding of trends in the level of post-viral fatigue syndrome.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 14 July 2020]: No specific assessment has been made. Funding for services for people with myalgic encephalomyelitis is a local matter and is the

responsibility of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). CCGs are best placed to ensure NHS services are commissioned to meet local population need, taking into account best practice guidance such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline 'Chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (or encephalopathy): diagnosis and management', published in 2007 and currently being updated.

■ **Contact Tracing: Computer Software**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[58712]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS GoodSAM Responder App, how many volunteers (a) applied, (b) were successful and (c) have been utilised since the app was launched.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 June 2020]: As of 23 June 2020, out of the 750,000 people who have signed up to the NHS Volunteer Responders programme, 589,450 have completed the necessary identity checks to begin helping those most vulnerable.

We do not hold the data on number of volunteers utilised in the format requested.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[67506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 23rd June 2020, Official Report, column 1180, how Government covid-19 guidance permits family and friends to perform childcare for people ineligible to form social bubbles with social distancing measures still in force.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Households that are not in areas where local lockdown measures are in place can meet in groups of up to two households in any location or in any setting (or a household support bubble if they have one) and this includes staying overnight. This allows for people to provide childcare. They should socially distance where possible and practical but should also provide necessary care to children including where this requires being within two metres. When doing this they should take particular care to maintain excellent hygiene – washing hands and surfaces – when using shared facilities like bathrooms.

Guidance on meeting people from outside of the household has been published and can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household>

■ Coronavirus: Holiday Accommodation

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[68762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the clinical evidential basis is for (a) a maximum of two households to meet in self-catered accommodation and (b) a group of more than two households to book rooms in the same hotel.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

People can stay overnight with another household – both in their home or away from home, for example at a hotel or in self-catered holiday accommodation, but they should follow social distancing rules and limit their interactions with those outside their household (or support bubble). This means that although more than two households can book into the same hotel, they should stay socially distanced from each other and limit gatherings to two households. The scientific advice is to minimise the number of households you come into contact with, in order to avoid creating chains of transmission

Venues providing accommodation should follow COVID-19-secure guidance to minimise the risk of infection to customers and staff.

We continually closely monitor the infection rate and are easing restrictions only when it is safe to do so.

■ Coronavirus: Mental Illness

Catherine West:

[\[73025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the rate of mental health problems among people affected by covid-19; and how much funding has been allocated from the public purse to provide mental health support for those people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 July 2020]: There is broad consensus that there is the potential for an increase in demand for mental health services as a result of COVID-19 and we are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England and others to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term impacts and plan for how to support mental health and wellbeing throughout the 'recovery' phase.

Our NHS Long Term Plan commitment to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year to mental health services by 2023-24 remains. We have provided £5 million of additional funding for mental health charities to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[69618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June to Question 56054 on Coronavirus: disease control, what evidence the Government is using to reduce social distancing from two metres to one metre plus.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 9 July 2020]: The Government commissioned a review into the two metre social distancing rule and took advice from a range of experts, including the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Advisor, behavioural scientists and economists to ensure that it comprehensively examined how the two metre rule works in practice, the evidence around transmission of the virus in different environments, incidence rates, and international comparisons.

■ Coronavirus: Tattooing**Luke Pollard:**[\[64324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what public health concerns he identified as part of his recent decision-making not to re-open tattooists' premises as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Luke Pollard:[\[65011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of level of risk of covid-19 being transmitted in (a) tattooists, and (b) hairdressers.

Helen Whately:

The Government has considered the impact of close contact services such as tattooing and hairdressing on COVID-19 transmission. The advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) is clear that the risk of COVID-19 transmission increases with close contact, prolonged contact and higher numbers of contact. Given the nature of both tattooing and hairdressing, close contact is inevitable. Both pose a high risk of transmission, though there is a greater likelihood of prolonged proximity and exposure in tattooing compared to hairdressing.

■ Dementia: Social Services**James Gray:**[\[73704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to take account of the needs of people with dementia in his long term plans for social care reform.

Helen Whately:

The Government's number one priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and to find long term solutions for one of the biggest challenges we face as a society.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**Karin Smyth:** [\[57252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 48519 tabled on 18 May 2020 by the hon. Member for Bristol South, on social services.

Helen Whately:

I answered the hon. Member's question on 11 June.

Justin Madders: [\[60789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 52107 tabled on 25 May 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Justin Madders: [\[68365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2020 to Question 60789 on Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions, when he plans to respond to Question 52107 tabled on 25 May 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 July 2020]: I replied to the hon. Member's Question 52107 on 18 June.

Justin Madders: [\[60790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 52109 tabled on 25 May 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Justin Madders: [\[60791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 52110 tabled on 25 April 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Justin Madders: [\[68366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Question 60790 tabled on 17 June 2020, when he plans to respond to Question 52109 tabled on 25 May 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Justin Madders: [\[68367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Question 60791 on 17 June 2020 when he plans to respond to Question 52110 tabled on 25 April 2020 by the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston.

Helen Whately:

I replied to the hon. Member's Questions 52109 and 52110 on 18 June.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[72859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 60709, tabled on 17 June 2020 by the hon. Member for Worsley and Eccles South.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 16 July 2020]: I replied to the hon. Member's question on 14 July.

■ Emergencies

Justin Madders:

[\[71086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many serious incidents have been reported in the last 12 months.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 13 July 2020]: As of 13 July 2020, 19,073 Serious Incidents were reported on the Strategic Executive Information System (StEIS) between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020. This number may change should investigation findings indicate that an incident initially reported as a Serious Incident does not require investigation under the Serious Incident Framework.

■ Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (England) 2020

Munira Wilson:

[\[66213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to make (a) written and (b) oral statements to Parliament following each 28 day review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (England) 2020 to publish the findings of those reviews.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 26 March and has been kept under continual review. At each review point of the Health Protection Regulations, the Government has provided a written or oral statement to Parliament. The Prime Minister made oral statements to the Commons on 11 May, *Official report, columns 24-27*, and 23 June, *Official report, columns 1167-1170*. The Prime Minister's statement on 23 June outlined the changes being implemented after the fourth review, which come into effect on 4 July. In addition, we have made Written Ministerial Statements to the House of Commons and the House of Lords on 28 April ([HCWS206](#)) and 2 June ([HCWS253](#)). This process will be continued by the Government following future reviews.

Munira Wilson:

[\[66214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 28-day reviews of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (England) 2020 will include a full necessity and proportionality assessment.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government is keeping its social distancing measures under continual review. If at any time we judge that one of the measures is no longer necessary to protect public health we are required by law to change that measure.

■ **Hospitals: Coronavirus****Stella Creasy:**[\[69537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS trusts are now enabling partners to attend (a) scans, (b) hospital appointments and (c) the birth of a child as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 9 July 2020]: The data requested are not collected centrally.

Nickie Aiken:[\[70494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that all hospitals are able to facilitate visits of immediate family members to seriously ill patients in non-covid-19 related wards.

Helen Whately:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Dan Poulter MP) on 22 June 2020 to Question [53383](#).

■ **Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review****Cat Smith:**[\[71812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to work with (a) Epilepsy Action and (b) other (i) patient groups and (ii) charities to ensure that the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are implemented.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is working with the Valproate Stakeholder Network (which is composed of over 40 representatives including Epilepsy Action, other charities and patient groups) to improve compliance with the valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme which aims to rapidly reduce and eventually eliminate pregnancies exposed to valproate. The MHRA is also working on developing a valproate registry, the main aims of which would be to monitor the use of valproate in girls and women in the United Kingdom and compliance with the current regulatory position, and to identify and monitor any children born to women on valproate.

Baroness Cumberlege was asked to review what happened in the three cases and we will consider her recommendations carefully.

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review: Government Responses

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[73679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral statement of 9 July 2020 by the Minister for Patient Safety on the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, Official Report, column 1147, what the timescale is for the Government's response to the Review's recommendations; what form that response will take; and whether he plans for that response to be subject to a debate on the floor of the House.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: The Government received the report on 8 July and now needs to consider it carefully. We will provide a further update in due course.

■ Mental Health Act 1983

John McDonnell:

[\[72777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to reform the Mental Health Act 1989.

Dan Carden:

[\[73064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Gracious Speech of 19 December 2019, Official Report column 31, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to reform the Mental Health Act 1989 during the 2019-21 Session.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Luton South (Rachel Hopkins MP) on 14 July 2020 to Question [68461](#).

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[73750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on reform the Mental Health Act 1983.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Luton South (Rachel Hopkins MP) on 14 July 2020 to Question [68461](#).

■ Mental Health: Grenfell Tower

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[71713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the mental health effect on leaseholders whose properties have been found to have been fitted with flammable cladding following the Grenfell Tower Fire; and what support his Department has provided to those leaseholds to alleviate that effect.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 14 July 2020]: There are no specifically targeted mental health programmes for residents of other buildings fitted with flammable cladding. If residents of buildings fitted with flammable cladding need mental health support, we would urge them to make contact with their general practitioner to discuss these issues so they may be referred to mental health services as appropriate.

Mental health is one of the Government's top priorities and we are working across Government to ensure that all people, regardless of their residential situation, get the help and support they need.

■ NHS: Equal Pay**Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[62692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has in place to close the 4.9 per cent pay gap reported in 2018 between White and Black, Asian and ethnic minority consultants in the NHS.

Helen Whately:

In 2018 an independent review into the extent and causes of the gender pay gap in medicine was launched. The review, yet to be published, chaired by Professor Dame Jane Dacre is expected to make a recommendation about the need to review the pay gap in other protected characteristics. The Department is currently considering plans for a review into the ethnicity pay gap in the National Health Service.

Dialogue continues with the British Medical Association and NHS Employers to ensure all the medical contract pay, terms and conditions of service are attractive and support recruitment and retention of medical staff from all ethnic backgrounds, while enabling long term sustainability for all NHS doctors, employers and the taxpayer.

The NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard, a compulsory initiative for all NHS trusts and established in 2015, have developed a programme of work to close the gaps in experiences between black, Asian and minority ethnic and white staff, including those who aspire to develop their careers in the NHS.

■ NHS: Sick Leave**Sam Tarry:**[\[69738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the sickness absence rates of employees working for outsourced NHS Soft FM providers (a) from January 2020 to July 2020 and (b) from January 2019 to July 2019.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ NHS: Students

Caroline Lucas:

[\[66015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that every (a) nursing, (b) midwifery and (c) healthcare student who signed up to undertake a paid placement in the NHS to help with the covid-19 outbreak response has their initial paid placement length agreement honoured.

Helen Whately:

The Government is extremely grateful to all student nurses who have supported the COVID-19 response, by opting into a paid placement for their time in practice at the frontline during the pandemic. Health Education England (HEE) has worked alongside the Council of Deans of Health, NHS Employers and NHS trade unions to provide clarity for students undertaking paid placements.

Any student, who is in the last six months of their programme and on a paid placement, will be fully paid until the end of their contract, unless otherwise agreed. By the end of July most final year students can qualify as registered nurses and start full time work, increasing their pay. For students in year two or the first part of their final year, employers and universities will work with them to aim to bring paid placements to a close by the 31 August. This will be part of a voluntary learning agreement between student, placement provider and university. HEE has published an agreed Frequently Asked Questions document.

■ Nurses: Finance

Alex Sobel:

[\[60859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department will extend payments to student nurses from 31 July 2020 to the end of September 2020.

Helen Whately:

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

Health Education England (HEE) has worked alongside the Council of Deans of Health, NHS Employers and NHS trade unions to agree a collective approach and provide further clarity for students undertaking paid placements.

Any student, who is in the last six months of their programme and on a paid placement, will be fully paid until the end of their contract, unless otherwise agreed. By the end of July most final year students can qualify as registered nurses and start full time work, increasing their pay. For students in year two or the first part of their final year, employers and universities will work with them to bring paid placements to a close by the 31 August. This will be part of a voluntary learning agreement between student, placement provider and university. HEE has published an agreed Frequently Asked Questions document.

■ Nurses: Students

Olivia Blake:

[\[60896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions has he had with (a) his Ministers, (b) trade unions and (c) NHS managers on the termination of student nurses' paid placements in the NHS on 31 July 2020.

Helen Whately:

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

Health Education England (HEE) has worked alongside the Council of Deans of Health, NHS Employers and NHS trade unions to agree a collective approach and provide further clarity for students undertaking paid placements.

Any student, who is in the last six months of their programme and on a paid placement, will be fully paid until the end of their contract, unless otherwise agreed. By the end of July most final year students can qualify as registered nurses and start full time work, increasing their pay. For students in year two or the first part of their final year, employers and universities will work with them to aim to bring paid placements to a close by the 31 August. This will be part of a voluntary learning agreement between student, placement provider and university. HEE has published an agreed Frequently Asked Questions document.

■ Physiotherapy: Pain

Esther McVey:

[\[69531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the treatment of soft tissue therapists for patients in pain when no other solution is available.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment of soft tissue therapy for patients in pain, when no other solution is available, has been made. However, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline 'Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: assessment and management', published in 2016, sets out that clinicians should consider "manual therapy (spinal manipulation, mobilisation or soft tissue techniques such as massage) for managing low back pain with or without sciatica, but only as part of a treatment package including exercise, with or without psychological therapy".

■ Pregnancy

Alex Sobel:

[\[72258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to issue updated guidance on the attendance by (a) partners, (b) friends and (c) doulas at midwifery appointments for pregnant women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service is making arrangements to ensure that women are supported and cared for safely through pregnancy, birth and the period afterwards during this pandemic.

Decisions on partners attending scans and appointments is subject to local discretion by trusts and other NHS bodies. Local maternity teams will be able to advise women on their policy on partners attending antenatal appointments including scans.

Guidance produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists is clear that women should be encouraged to have one birth partner, who has no symptoms of COVID-19, present with them during any type of labour and birth, unless the birth occurs under general anaesthetic. The guidance is reviewed on a weekly basis in light of any new evidence or changes in policy.

■ Social Distancing: Households**Tim Farron:**[\[65993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether two households meeting in a home after 4 July 2020 are advised to remain one meter apart.

Tim Farron:[\[65994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether one household is able to stay overnight in another household's home.

Tim Farron:[\[65995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are able to meet inside from 4 July 2020 from different households if they are able to remain socially distanced.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 2 July 2020]: Since 13 June, single adult households - in other words adults who live alone or with dependent children only - can form a 'support bubble' with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to spend time together inside each other's homes, including overnight, without needing to stay two metres apart.

From 4 July people can meet in groups of up to two households (a support bubble counts as one household) in any location - public or private, indoors or outdoors, in any setting and this includes staying overnight. All those in a support bubble can spend time together inside each other's homes and can act as if they live in the same household.

People in a support bubble do not need to observe social distancing guidelines when they spend time with each other but should limit indoor meetings so are only meeting one other household at a time, in addition to a support bubble (if they have one).

There is no limit on the size of either household.

■ Social Services: Contracts**Sam Tarry:** [69740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of all social care providers operating on publicly funded contracts.

Helen Whately:

This information is not held centrally. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are responsible for commissioning publicly funded adult social care services. They have a legal duty to fund care for people with eligible needs and who meet the financial thresholds for public funding, and to commission care services for anyone who meets these requirements. The local government transparency code requires local authorities to publish details of any commissioned activity with a value that exceeds £5,000.

■ Social Services: Pay**Sir Edward Davey:** [64828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to end the practice of private social care workers being paid by the minute; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

All social care workers are entitled to be paid at least the national minimum wage or national living wage for the work that they do. Time spent caring for clients, travelling between appointments, and waiting to start the appointment should be included in the pay calculation. Further guidance on what counts as working time is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/minimum-wage-different-types-work>

Caroline Lucas: [69515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that care workers are paid a minimum of (a) £9.30 an hour and (b) £10.75 an hour in London in line with the amount set by the Living Wage Foundation; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Government does not set the levels of pay for care workers; however, we are committed to raising the profile of the social care sector and want to see those working in social care sector properly recognised and rewarded for their work. Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges that we face as a society. There are complex questions to address, which is why we have invited cross-party talks. That is why we are committed to taking forward social care reform during this Parliament.

■ Social Services: Sick Leave

Sam Tarry:

[69739]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the sickness absence rates for social care workers (a) from January 2020 to July 2020 and (b) January 2019 to July 2019.

Helen Whately:

The sickness absence rates for social care workers is not collected centrally by the Department.

■ Social Services: Welfare Tax Credits

Jim Shannon:

[63345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of introducing tax credits for people who have young children and take up a career in adult social care.

Helen Whately:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 10 March 2020 to Question [23406](#). Since then, the Government has published a COVID-19 Action Plan for Adult Social Care, which sets out our aim to increase the social care workforce. This includes a national recruitment campaign 'Every Day is Different', launched on 23 April, highlighting the vital role of the social care workforce during this pandemic and the longer-term opportunities for working in care. We have also launched a new online platform, 'Join Social Care', to fast-track recruitment into the adult social care sector. This allows candidates to access free training via Skills for Care and the opportunity to be considered for multiple job opportunities.

Every Day is Different can be found at the following link:

<https://www.everydayisdifferent.com>

Join Social Care can be found at the following link:

<https://www.joinsocialcare.co.uk>

■ Spinal Injuries: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon:

[65121]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to introduce evoke spinal chord stimulation technology for treatment of chronic back and leg pain through the NHS.

Helen Whately:

The commissioning of spinal cord stimulation (SCS) is the responsibility of clinical commissioning groups. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Technology Appraisal 'Spinal cord stimulation for chronic pain of neuropathic or ischaemic origin' reviewed in 2014, recommends SCS as a treatment option for

adults with chronic pain of neuropathic or ischaemic origin. The guidance is available at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta159

There are a wide range of SCS devices available, and centres can choose which type of device to implant. The Evoke device is available through the NHS Supply Chain.

■ Streptococcus

Steve Brine:

[71756]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to support Strep B Awareness Month from 1 July to 31 July 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Public Health England's national programme Start4Life provides advice and practical guidance to parents-to-be and families with babies and under-fives, to help them adopt healthy behaviours and build parenting skills. The Start4Life website can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life>

Start4Life has been supporting Group B streptococcus Awareness month by posting from social media channels throughout July. The posts have been designed to raise awareness of Group B Strep, testing in pregnancy and the warning signs to look for in newborn babies.

Channels include Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Start4Life has also been re-sharing posts made by Group B Strep Support, a United Kingdom charity.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants

Dr Julian Lewis:

[73680]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department holds data on the number of victims of the vaginal mesh implants scandal that have undergone mesh removal surgery (a) within and (b) outside the NHS, and have subsequently found significant mesh residue that was overlooked during remedial surgery; what plans he has to certify NHS specialists as competent to undertake that surgery; and what steps he plans to take to reimburse the cost to victims of the mesh scandal who had to pay for private (i) therapy and (ii) surgery, as a result of a refusal by NHS specialists to accept that their symptoms were (A) physical rather than mental and (B) had been caused by their mesh implants.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: NHS Digital advises that it publishes finished consultant episodes for National Health Service hospitals where a procedure for treatment of urogynaecological prolapse or stress urinary incontinence (insertion or removal) is recorded. This provisional data is published monthly and the final data is included in the Annual Hospital Episode Statistics publication.

On mesh removal, NHS England is assessing bids from NHS providers to be specialist centres providing treatment for women with complications of mesh inserted for urinary incontinence and vaginal prolapse. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, every effort is now being made to finalise this quickly and stakeholders will be kept up to date with progress.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[73681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the vaginal mesh implants scandal, if he will take steps to ensure that the establishment of specialist treatment centres are multidisciplinary in order to permit an holistic approach to treatment and to avoid multiple referrals by GPs to (a) neurology, (b) orthopaedic, (c) rheumatology, (d) urology, and (e) other specialists lacking mesh-specific skills; and if he will ensure that NHS personnel previously involved in denying the harmful effects of vaginal mesh implants are excluded from staffing those remedial treatment centres.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: NHS England is assessing bids from National Health Service providers to be specialist centres providing treatment for women with complications of mesh inserted for urinary incontinence and vaginal prolapse. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, every effort is now being made to finalise this quickly and stakeholders will be kept up to date with progress.

The service specification requires that providers of complex mesh services must use the trust appraisal system to ensure surgeons are appropriately trained and current in their practice; adhere to clinical guidance; comply with national data requirements; and report complications. Clear documented evidence demonstrating competency to perform complex vaginal mesh removal surgery for all surgical members of the multidisciplinary team is also required.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[73682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the vaginal mesh implants scandal, if he will take steps to require (a) medical personnel who are consultants to firms making medical products that they propose to use for their patients (i) declare their interest and (ii) draw their patients' attention to such a declaration when recommending the use of those products and (b) victims of that scandal of whatever age do not have to pay prescription charges for medication required to treat their resultant injuries and symptoms.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: The General Medical Council already has guidance covering financial and commercial arrangements and conflicts of interest, which all medical practitioners must adhere to and which came into effect on 22 April 2013. We will consider whether these arrangements should be strengthened.

National Health service prescription charge exemptions are in place to help those with greatest need.

The Government will consider the recommendations in the First Do No Harm report published on 8 July very carefully.

■ **Tobacco: Sweden**

Adam Afriyie: [64875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the US Food and Drug Administration's designation of Swedish snus as a modified risk tobacco product, if he will discontinue the ban on snus oral tobacco.

Jo Churchill:

Snus is banned in the United Kingdom under the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. The Government will consider reviewing the position on snus in due course.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Asylum: Families**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [73096]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 7 October 2019 to Question 293719 on Asylum: Families, how many Dublin Regulation family reunion cases have entered the system in each month since December 2019.

Chris Philp:

The UK remains fully committed to meeting its obligations under the Dublin Regulation and we will continue to accept requests for transfer until the end of the transition period.

The Home Office publishes data on the Dublin III Regulation on an annual basis (each February) in the Immigration Statistics. This includes data on the number of requests and transfers into and out of the UK, broken down by article and Member State requesting. The latest data, covering up to December 2019, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#dublin-regulation>

Instructions on how to use the data can be found in the 'Notes' sheet.

■ **Asylum: Housing**

Shabana Mahmood: [75240]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the local authorities that were consulted in advance of the implementation of the asylum dispersal scheme.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[75241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what correspondence her Department had with Birmingham City Council in advance of the implementation of the asylum dispersal scheme.

Chris Philp:

Birmingham has been a dispersal area for a number of years, and we do not hold records of the engagement held.

With regards to current dispersal, the Home Office is working in partnership with Local Authority Chief Executives through the Home Office Local Government Chief Executive group's, who have agreed a change plan, that seeks to achieve a more equitable dispersal of asylum seekers across the UK and seeks to overcome barriers to ensure availability of service provision.

The plan has been paused in light of the current covid-19 crisis but will resume once restrictions on accommodation moves have been lifted.

■ **British Nationality: Armed Forces**

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[73980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support individuals of all ages to gain British Citizenship after being born to parents serving in the UK armed forces overseas.

Kevin Foster:

Under current legislation a person born overseas to a member of the UK armed forces will be a British citizen automatically if this parent is a British citizen.

A person born after 13 January 2010 to a parent who is not a British citizen but was serving in the UK armed forces has an entitlement to register as a British citizen.

In other cases, a child under the age of 18 can apply for registration at the Home Secretary's discretion; adults would need to meet the requirements for naturalisation. The Ministry of Defence will provide the necessary support and guidance, with the tri services welfare teams and Family Federation welfare groups providing a reliable source of information for those who may be eligible for this.

■ **Domestic Abuse**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[33514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of social distancing on (a) victims of domestic abuse and (b) the children of those people.

Victoria Atkins:

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime. We fully recognise the severe impact it has on both victims and their children, and that many of them may feel even more vulnerable during social distancing and self-isolation.

The Government is liaising with specialist domestic abuse service providers and local authorities to monitor and assess the impact of social distancing on victims of domestic abuse and their children, and to ensure that sources of advice and support continue to be available to them.

Ensuring that vulnerable children remain protected is our top priority. Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for delivery of children's social care but we are considering all options to ensure that they are able to continue to deliver services effectively. Local authorities know their children, families and communities well and are best placed to make decisions about how to best manage children's social care services during the current national emergency.

Attending education settings is known as a protective factor for children receiving the support of a social worker. We have therefore asked schools to remain open for children who are vulnerable, as well as for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response who absolutely need to attend. Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker, and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend provision, so long as they do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and education provider should explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

The Home Office has provided £3.1 million this year for specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse, as a continuation of the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse fund.

The Government has also supported local authorities with a total of £3.2bn in additional funding, which will support local authorities in meeting additional demands, including on their children's services, at this time.

■ Domestic Abuse: Children

Jess Phillips:

[37710]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the charity sector on community support provision for children affected by domestic abuse.

Victoria Atkins:

The landmark [Domestic Abuse](#) Bill, reintroduced on 3 March, will help to better protect and support victims of domestic abuse and their children across the country. There has been frequent engagement with representatives of the charity sector in respect of protections for children in the context of this legislation.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner has agreed to undertake an in-depth exploration of the current community-based support landscape to help us better understand the existing routes by which these services are commissioned and funded. The

Government will then work with the Commissioner to understand the needs identified and develop options on how best to address them.

■ Domestic Abuse: Protection

Jess Phillips:

[34999]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) national broadcasts and (b) online communications the Government has planned to help safeguard people at risk of domestic abuse during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Atkins:

We are aware that victims of domestic abuse may feel particularly vulnerable at this time. We have published information for victims on gov.uk: www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse

The Government also launched the #YouAreNotAlone awareness raising campaign to signpost support available to victims of domestic abuse during lockdown. The campaign was launched by the Home Secretary at a nationally televised No.10 press briefing on 11th April.

The campaign channels are predominantly online to reach victims in their homes. The campaign has included activity to reach diverse audiences via advertising and editorial opportunities on specialist radio, print and TV outlets including their online and social channels, and social media support from relevant influencers, celebrities and community organisations. The campaign materials have been translated into 16 priority languages and shared with partners. including via social media.

The Home Office also regularly posts content on its social media channels related to domestic abuse support, including signposting people to the gov.uk page and the DA helpline as well as informing people about the forms domestic abuse can take.

■ Domestic Abuse: Telephone Services

Alex Sobel:

[43157]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to develop referral pathways between domestic abuse helplines and organisations to ensure that victims of domestic abuse coming forward get the support they require.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government has posted advice regarding national helpline on gov.uk to guide victims to the most appropriate support for their individual needs. This has been extensively promoted through our awareness raising campaign #YouAreNotAlone.

The Home Office has provided £2m of funding including to help bolster such helplines at this time. This is in addition to the £750 million funding package announced by the Chancellor, £76 million of which will support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery as well as ensure that vulnerable children and young people continue to get the help they need.

The management of individual helplines is a matter for the responsible organisations, however we continue to liaise with the sector to seek to ensure that help continues to be available to those that need it.

■ Domestic Abuse: Victim Support Schemes

Christine Jardine:

[\[39692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support her Department is providing to BAME women who have experienced domestic abuse during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Atkins:

We are working closely with the sector, the police and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on victims of domestic abuse, including BAME women, and have published guidance and advice online.

The awareness campaign, #YouAreNotAlone, launched by the Home Secretary, signposts victims to further support, including specific resources for BAME women.

The Home Secretary announced £2 million in funding to ensure that helplines and online services continue to be easily accessible to victims. £1.2 million of this has already been allocated, including to Karma Nirvana, which supports BAME victims. This is in addition to the £750 million funding package announced by the Chancellor, £76 million of which will support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and modern slavery as well as ensure that vulnerable children and young people continue to get the help they need.

■ Furniture: Fire Resistant Materials

Geraint Davies:

[\[73688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to remove upholstered furniture, carpets and curtains in UK (a) hotels, (b) care homes, (c) hospitals and (d) other non-domestic properties that still contain the flame retardant chemical DecaBDE since that chemical was banned under REACH in March 2019.

James Brokenshire:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) is the legislation covering fire safety in non-domestic premises in England and Wales. The FSO requires the person responsible for the premises to undertake a fire risk assessment of the premises and put in place and maintain adequate fire protection measures to reduce the risk to life from fire to as low as reasonably practicable.

The FSO does not prescribe the levels of flame-retardant chemicals used in products. Product safety comes under the Office of Product Safety and Standards, which is the body responsible for the regulations that apply to furniture and furnishings.

Geraint Davies:

[\[73689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department, what steps she has taken to reduce the levels of flame retardant chemicals used in furniture, carpets, curtains and other

product in non-domestic properties in order to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

James Brokenshire:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) is the legislation covering fire safety in non-domestic premises in England and Wales. The FSO requires the person responsible for the premises to undertake a fire risk assessment of the premises and put in place and maintain adequate fire protection measures to reduce the risk to life from fire to as low as reasonably practicable.

The FSO does not prescribe fire protection measures, nor the levels of flame-retardant chemicals used in products present. The particular measures and their properties is a matter for the responsible person.

■ **Gangmasters: Licensing**

Stuart C McDonald:

[76043]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which overseas labour providers have been licensed for labour provision to the Seasonal Workers' Pilot by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority since 1 September 2018.

Kevin Foster:

Two labour providers were selected to run the Seasonal Workers' Pilot: Pro Force and Concordia.

Concordia deal with a small number of agencies as part of the seasonal pilot scheme and Pro Force do not use other licensed labour provider businesses as they manage the recruitment directly.

Stuart C McDonald:

[76044]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what overseas visits have been undertaken by officials from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority for the purpose of labour licensing activity since 1 September 2018.

Kevin Foster:

No overseas visits have been undertaken by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority for the purpose of labour licensing activity since 1 September 2018.

■ **Immigration: British National (Overseas)**

Neil Coyle:

[73859]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the immigration rules for British National (Overseas) passport holders.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary was pleased to announce details of the new immigration route for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) citizens today, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hong-kong-bno-visa-policy-statement>

Immigration Rules for the new Hong Kong BN(O) Visa will be brought forward in due course.

■ Metropolitan Police: Racial Discrimination

Ms Harriet Harman:

[75980]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to provide racial bias training to every police officer in the Metropolitan Police Service.

Kit Malthouse:

The public rightly expect police officers to meet high standards of professional conduct. In this country, the power of the police to fulfil their duties is wholly dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain this public respect.

The College of Policing, which sets and maintains training standards for policing, published the Code of Ethics in 2014. This includes a set of principles for policing, including that all officers and staff should take active steps to oppose discrimination and make their decisions free from prejudice. This is a cornerstone of police training and development.

The College of Policing's foundation training for all those entering the service includes substantial coverage of police ethics and self-understanding, including the effects of personal conscious and unconscious bias. Initial training covers hate crimes, ethics and equalities, and policing without bias.

Forces also provide local training and development at several different levels ranging from initial entry, leadership and ongoing development to reflect and reinforce organisational values.

■ Offences against Children: Victim Support Schemes

Jonathan Gullis:

[73987]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that children who have been sexually abused have access to high quality, timely, specialist support provided by (a) Barnardo's and (b) other sector specialist organisations.

Victoria Atkins:

We are determined that all children who experience sexual abuse can access the support they need, and we have significantly increased funding to specialist organisations across the country which help victims and survivors of child sexual abuse cope with and, as far as possible, recover from the abuse they have suffered.

For example, the Home Office and Ministry of Justice have recently doubled the funding (£2.4m over the next two years) available for specialist voluntary sector organisations providing support to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse at a national level. We have also launched a new £2.8m transformation fund to promote and embed best practice in support to children and young people who have

experienced sexual abuse. This year the Ministry of Justice has also increased the funding available to rape support centres across England and Wales by 50%, from £8 million to £12 million per annum, to provide much needed support to victims of sexual violence and abuse, including child sexual abuse.

Alongside this support, we are also funding a new £7m 'See, Hear, Respond' service led by Barnardo's for vulnerable children, young people and their families. The service will support children who are at risk of harm, including sexual abuse, and who not are currently receiving support from statutory agencies. The service will develop a dynamic sector response that intervenes, supports and safeguards these children early, preventing long lasting harm to them and their families.

■ Offences against Children: Victims

Louise Haigh:

[\[7256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to create pardonable offences for victims of child sexual exploitation whose criminal record arose as a result of their exploitation.

Victoria Atkins:

Child sexual abuse is an abhorrent crime that has a devastating impact on victims and survivors. The Government's Victims Strategy outlines our commitments to improve support for victims of child sexual abuse by making sure that criminal justice agencies recognise exploitation when they see it and respond appropriately.

The government has no current plans to create pardonable offences for victims of child sexual exploitation whose criminal record arose as a result of their exploitation. Applications for pardons are considered on a case-by-case basis.

■ Seasonal Workers: Pilot Schemes

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[76041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many workers on a Tier 5 Seasonal Worker Visa have made a request to (a) Concordia and (b) Pro Force to change their employer since the start of the Seasonal Workers Pilot.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office does not hold this data, only the scheme operators do. Therefore, we are unable to answer the question.

■ Seasonal Workers: Visas

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[76042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many workers have received a Tier 5 Seasonal Worker Visa to work in UK agriculture since the start of the Seasonal Workers' Pilot, by (a) nationality and (b) UK constituent country.

Chris Philp:

The published statistics on the Seasonal Worker Pilot may be found at the links below. Please note that the data is not broken down by region.

The Home Office publishes data on Tier 5 Seasonal Workers visas in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

Data on grants of Tier 5 Seasonal Workers visas, by nationality, are published in table Vis_D02 of the entry clearance detailed datasets.

Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook. The latest data relates to year ending March 2020. Data for April to June 2020 are due for future publication on 27 August 2020.

Additionally, the Home Office publishes a high-level overview of the data in the entry clearance summary tables. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020/list-of-tables#entry-clearance-visas> The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on entry clearance visas.

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

■ **Slavery****Carolyn Harris:****[73903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) scale and (b) nature of modern slavery throughout the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

The 2019 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840059/Modern_Slavery_Report_2019.pdf sets out an assessment of

trends in modern slavery in the UK. The Home Office also publishes quarterly statistics on potential victims being referred to the National Referral Mechanism.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-statistics-quarter-3-2019-july-to-september>

In March 2020, the Office for National Statistics published a report entitled 'Modern Slavery in the UK: March 2020',

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/modernslaveryintheuk/march2020> which brought together data sources linked to modern

slavery. The report noted that there is no definitive source of data or suitable method available to accurately quantify the number of potential victims of modern slavery in the UK. However, we are committed to improving our understanding of this complex and hidden crime. In July 2019, the Government announced a £10 million investment to create a new Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern Slavery and Human Rights.

We will continue working with the Centre and other partners to strengthen the evidence base of the nature and scale of modern slavery in the UK.

■ Slavery: Victim Support Schemes

Carolyn Harris:

[\[73902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the implications of the FCA's freezing of Wire Card for her emergency response policy on payment card freezes to ensure that future victims of trafficking are supported as part of the Victim Care Contract and able to access funds.

Victoria Atkins:

The Prime Contractor of the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery support contract (AVMS), The Salvation Army, has contingency and business continuity plans in place across a range of services to ensure resilience and continued support to victims of modern slavery.

Due to issues relating to the card provider, on 26 June 2020 potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery with access to a payment card through the AVMS support contract were informed the payment cards were frozen and advised to contact their dedicated support worker if they needed emergency cash payments.

All subcontractors of the AVMS support contract were also instructed to assess their service users for those who might have needed urgent payments, so they could be contacted proactively, and provided with support and access to funds as required.

On 30 June 2020, the freeze on the payment cards was lifted and all service users were able to resume using their payment cards.

All victims of modern slavery accessing financial support through the AVMS contract are eligible to access payment cards through this service, where relevant.

■ Terrorism: Victims

Conor McGinn:

[\[76062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the announcement of 30 March 2020 on £500,000 funding for victims of terrorism, how many applications she has received to date; how much of that funding has been distributed; how many (a) organisations and (b) people have received such funding; and how much each of those organisations and individuals have received.

James Brokenshire:

Unfortunately, given that this grant competition is still in progress, we are unable to provide the requested information at this time. Any award announcement will be published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>.

■ Vetting

Rosie Cooper:

[\[27635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will take steps to ensure that the Disclosure and Barring Service provides Mr Andrew Hodgson, a constituent of

the hon Member for West Lancashire, with a replacement copy of his certificate before 14 March 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

The Disclosure and Barring Service processed a certificate for your constituent on the 11 March 2020.

If MPs require specific information regarding a constituent, they should write to the Department.

■ **Visas: Disease Control**

Pete Wishart:

[73736]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish further information on the potential further extension of visas for people unable to leave the UK to travel home after 31 July 2020.

Kevin Foster:

The latest information in respect of advice for visa holders can be found on GOV.UK at: www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents. This is kept under review.

The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support those affected by the covid-19 outbreak. We recognise further adjustments are likely to be required to cater for all scenarios, and we are working through these, to ensure people are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

■ **Visas: Iran**

Drew Hendry:

[76068]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the projected timeframe is for the restoration of the main visa application service centre in Iran.

Kevin Foster:

As global travel and public health restrictions imposed as a result of Coronavirus (COVID-19) have started to lift, UKVI began a phased approach to resuming visa services overseas from 1 June, where local conditions allowed and it was safe to do so. We have worked closely with our commercial partners to ensure visa application centres (VACs) can reopen safely and customers and staff are protected and have now reopened over 130 VACs globally.

The VAC in Tehran is in the next phase and is scheduled to reopen on Sunday 26 July, with new appointments being made available from 20 July.

Further information can be found on:

<https://www.vfsglobal.co.uk/ir/en/news/temporary-closure-of-the-uk-visa-application-centre-in-iran>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Buildings: Fire Prevention****Geraint Davies:**[\[73687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish a review of fire-safety requirements of domestic and non-domestic properties and their interaction with the (a) Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 and (b) Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has now published the Draft Building Safety Bill – the next step in making the most significant change to building legislation in nearly 40 years. In addition to this, the Government has introduced the Fire Safety Bill which will clarify that the Fire Safety Order applies to external walls and individual flat entrance doors in all multi-occupied residential buildings. Alongside the Building Safety Bill, the Home Office has launched a public consultation on the FSO which it will publish in due course. In July 2019, the Government announced that it will be developing a new approach to the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations to address the different sources and chemical risks posed by fire to upholstered furniture and furnishings in domestic properties.

Jonathan Gullis:[\[73988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to make a decision and publish his next steps on banning (a) laminated glass and (b) other combustible materials.

Christopher Pincher:

On 20 January 2020 we launched a public consultation including proposals to expand the scope of the in-effect ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls, this also included proposals with regards to laminated glass as well as other exemptions. The consultation closed on the 25 May 2020. We are currently analysing responses and will publish the government response to the consultation in due course.

■ District Councils: Coronavirus**Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[73815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support district councils respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

My Department has been working closely with district councils and sector representing organisations throughout the response to this crisis to understand the challenges they face. We also recognise the excellent work already being done up and down the country by all councils to support their communities during the crisis.

On 16 July 2020, my Department confirmed allocations for individual councils from the £500 million of additional support for coronavirus related spending pressures. The funding has been distributed between district and county councils to reflect the pressures they have reported. This is in addition to the £3.2 billion announced in April, taking the total given to councils to help their communities through the crisis to over £3.7 billion in unringfenced funding, an unprecedented level of additional financial support in recent times.

We have a number of established engagement channels in place to help ensure effective communication, feedback and information sharing and to provide support and latest guidance for councils;

- MHCLG ministers and officials regularly attend District Council Network (DCN) Covid-19 teleconferences
- MHCLG COVID-19 webinar is a regularly held teleconference, chaired by the Secretary of State and myself. All council leaders and chief executives are invited.
- Since 18 March, district council chief executives have received a daily bulletin from MHCLG. The MHCLG Coronavirus Bulletin contains information on the most recent central government announcements, guidance, letters and communication materials related to coronavirus.

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[73816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the financial sustainability of district councils.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Councils across the country are supporting communities, protecting the most vulnerable and helping the NHS in our efforts to combat Covid-19. In order to meet additional cost pressures, the Secretary of State announced further measures as part of a comprehensive package on 2 July. The package included an additional £500 million of support for councils for the coming weeks and months of recovery. This is in addition to the £3.2 billion already announced, taking the total unringfenced funding given to councils to help with the additional costs of coronavirus to over £3.7 billion. In total the Government has provided £5 billion in cashflow measures and almost £28 billion in additional funding for local communities, to ensure they can meet the unique pressures that the Covid-19 pandemic has placed upon them.

The Secretary of State has also announced measures to address lost income, including:

- A co-payment scheme to cover irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income in 20/21 with the Government covering 75 per cent of losses beyond 5 per cent of planned income
- Phased repayment of Collection Fund deficits over the next 3 years

- A commitment to determine what support is needed to help councils meet the pressures of irrecoverable tax income at the Spending Review

These measures amount to a comprehensive package of support. We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on local government.

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[73881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the £8.5 million allocated to the 115 successful bidders to the Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund has been received by the successful organisations.

Luke Hall:

To date we have allocated £8.76 million of the MHCLG £10 million Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund to 122 successful applications.

Payments are being processed as soon as grant funding agreements are signed by the applicants and the Government. As at 15 July, 97 per cent of the allocated funds have been received by the applicants.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[73882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many organisations who applied to the Covid-19 Domestic Abuse Accommodation Emergency Support Fund met the criteria and achieved (a) a score 4 and (b) a score 3 but were not successful in their applications.

Luke Hall:

To date, to keep vital domestic abuse safe accommodation services up and running, MHCLG has allocated £8.76 million of the £10 million Domestic Abuse COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund to 122 successful charity bidders. This additional funding will re-open 299 bedspaces that were closed due to COVID-19 will create 1293 additional bedspaces.

Each application for the £10 million Domestic Abuse Accommodation Emergency Support Fund is assessed, and scored between zero and four, against each of the criteria as set out within the fund prospectus.

Applications fail the assessment if scored 0 or 1 on any of the criteria.

To ensure Government meets its responsibility to spend public money wisely, due diligence checks are also undertaken to validate applicant eligibility and to provide an essential check on the financial status of applicants. Applications which pass the assessment but fail due diligence checks do not proceed.

Of the 136 applications assessed, 3 applications were unsuccessful having passed the assessment but failing on due diligence checks.

■ Homelessness: Bank Services**Neil Coyle:**[\[75345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussion his Department is having with banks on (a) financial inclusion and (b) facilities open and access a bank for homeless people as part of the Housing First pilots.

Luke Hall:

Housing First has an impressive international record in helping people with complex needs to recover and stay off the streets for good, which is why we awarded £28 million to pilot it in three urban areas with contrasting challenges (the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region). This funding includes £2.7 million for an evaluation of the pilots which aim to support our most vulnerable people off the streets and into safe and secure homes.

As part of the delivery, the pilots are looking at all aspects of financial inclusion including maximising the benefits people are entitled to and ensuring that people have access to financial services such as banks. The pilots adhere to the 7 Housing First Principles of which one key principle is having choice and control. Therefore, if an individual requires access to financial services, we would expect providers to offer this level of support.

■ Leisure: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[73739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that multi-use venues can reopen for events as soon as is safely possible as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published the COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities on 30 June to help managers and users of community centres, village halls, and other local multi-use community facilities re-open safely. Business events, conferences and events centres will be given the go ahead to reopen on 1 October, provided rates of infection remain at current levels.

■ Multiple Occupation: Regulation**Dan Jarvis:**[\[76037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of local government to regulate houses in multiple occupation (HMO); and if his Department will undertake a review of HMO planning regulations.

Christopher Pincher:

Local authorities have strong powers to regulate houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). These include mandatory, additional and selective licensing as well as civil

penalties of up to £30,000, rent repayment orders and banning orders for those landlords who refuse to comply with the law.

Change of use from a dwellinghouse to a larger HMO housing more than six people always requires an application for planning permission. Nationally set permitted development rights allow a dwellinghouse to change use to a HMO for up to six people who share facilities, without the need for a planning application. This enables the change of use without placing unnecessary burdens on landlords and local planning authorities and we have no current plans to change this.

Where there is sufficient evidence that it is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area, a local planning authority may withdraw a permitted development right in a specific area using an Article 4 direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, after consultation with the local community.

The Department currently has no plans to review HMO planning regulations.

■ Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Richard Fuller:

[\[73765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 2.20 of the Budget Policy Paper of March 2020, what progress has been made on the examination and development of a case for up to four new Development Corporations in the OxCam Arc.

Mr Simon Clarke:

At Budget 2020, Government outlined plans to explore the case for up to four new Development Corporations at Bedford, St Neots/Sandy, Cambourne and Cambridge. Since the Budget my Department has engaged local partners on this work, and further detailed examination and development will continue in 2020 and 2021.

Richard Fuller:

[\[73766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the level of housing need in the Oxford Cambridge Arc.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Supporting housing delivery in the right places is crucial to delivering sustainable growth across the Arc. The standard method for calculating local housing need enables all communities to have a clear, transparent understanding of the minimum number of homes they need. It is for local authorities across the Arc to calculate their local housing need figure based on the standard method set out by my Department

At Budget 2020 the Government also announced it will work with local communities and partners, to deliver a spatial framework for the Arc to make sure future growth is planned over the long-term in a sustainable and coordinated way.

Richard Fuller:

[\[73767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what requirements the Government has placed on the provision of GP services ahead of new housing developments in the Oxford Cambridge Arc.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The National Planning Policy Framework states that plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of infrastructure required, such as that needed for health. Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan

Local authorities are able to use contributions from developers to support the delivery of local infrastructure, including GPs' surgeries.

Richard Fuller:

[\[73768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for his policies on the Oxford Cambridge Arc of the analysis of housing need in that area in the National Infrastructure Commission's report entitled, Partnering for Prosperity, published in November 2017.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The National Infrastructure Commission's report highlighted the significant potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc area, and recommended steps to meet this potential. The report was advisory and the Government issued a detailed response to its recommendations in October 2018 and more detail on how we will work with local partners in March 2019.

Richard Fuller:

[\[73769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on the environment of meeting the need for housing in the Oxford Cambridge Arc.

Mr Simon Clarke:

As we develop the Spatial Framework we will embed high environmental sustainability standards in our approach in the Arc. We will begin thorough and tailored environmental assessments now and for these to be conducted in parallel with the development of a wider strategic framework across the Arc.

■ Private Rented Housing: Energy

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[73938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a national registration scheme for privately rented properties in England to enable a better enforcement of energy efficiency minimum standards.

Christopher Pincher:

Minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector are backed up by strong enforcement powers for local authorities, including heavy fines. Recognising the importance of these standards, the Government is considering a range of measures to improve enforcement, striking the right balance between focusing on supporting good landlords and tackling those who wilfully flout their obligations.

In April 2018, using powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016, we introduced a national database of rogue landlords and letting agents. We are committed to broadening access to this database when parliamentary time allows.

■ Private Rented Housing: Standards**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[73937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of enforcement of standards in the private rented sector by local authorities.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not currently collect data from local authorities on enforcement of standards.

MHCLG publishes the English Housing Survey annually which collects information about people's housing circumstances and housing conditions in England. The Department has seen the proportion of private rented homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard fall from 37 per cent in 2010 to 25 per cent in 2018.

■ Tenants: Evictions**Laura Trott:**[\[73978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when landlords of (a) private and (b) public properties will be able to resume evictions of tenants who are committing antisocial behaviour as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Christopher Pincher:

Currently due to measures in place to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic, all possession procedures from private and public properties are suspended until 23 August 2020. We do not intend to extend the suspension of possession proceedings beyond this date.

Landlords may still serve a notice of intention to seek possession, but they must comply with the Coronavirus Act 2020 by providing their tenants with at least three months' notice. Our emergency measures to stay possessions and extend notice periods are designed to protect public health and as such apply to all cases, even where the issues a landlord has with their tenant are unrelated to the effects of COVID-19.

Both private and social landlords can also work with their local authority who have strong powers available to them through the Anti-social, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to tackle anti-social behaviour. These powers include the use of civil injunctions, closure orders and community protection notices.

■ **Vulnerable Adults: Coronavirus**

Rosie Cooper:

[73757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support the most vulnerable as part of (a) Test and Trace, (b) Local Lockdowns and (c) the Government's programme of economic recovery after the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We are working with other government departments to support local authorities in responding to additional vulnerability created by the COVID-19 outbreak through financial support, as well as engaging civil society and supermarkets to provide further assistance, including access to food and essential supplies.

The Government has also confirmed an additional £63 million for local authorities to help people who are struggling financially due to the impact of COVID-19.

We are working with DHSC to support local authorities to respond to COVID-19 outbreaks by ensuring capacity and accessibility is available for testing vulnerable groups. The Test and Trace scheme ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS and social care staff and care home residents.

The Government has always been clear that it will continually monitor the transmission of the virus in our communities and, if rates rise too much, our advice to those who are clinically extremely vulnerable may change. The Government is committed to supporting those shielding.

I have held 6 meetings of the Economic Recovery Working Group, which brings together local growth partners to discuss emerging themes and concerns across the country.

As a subset of the official-level Economic Recovery Working Group, which sits alongside the ministerial group and has met 11 times, officials are establishing 5 locally led task and finish groups to bring together local partners on specific recovery challenges, to foster strong collaboration between national and local partners and understand the levers we need to pull to support recovery.

We have written out to M9 mayors to ask them to coordinate economic recovery planning for their areas and encouraged them to focus initially on restarting the economy alongside Government social distancing guidelines.

■ Welsh Water: Herefordshire

Bill Wiggin:

[\[73731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to penalise Herefordshire council for enabling Welsh Water to restrict housing development.

Christopher Pincher:

Nutrient enrichment is a significant pressure on many of our most important natural habitats, and it is the role of Herefordshire Council as a competent authority to determine whether proposals for new development would cause a significant adverse impact on these habitats sites, including the River Wye. Where development can demonstrate that no such impact would occur, for example through achieving nutrient neutrality and therefore not increasing existing pollution levels, the Council may grant planning permission. It is important to keep the planning system moving as much as we can, so that it is able to play its full part in the economic recovery to come, at both national and local levels, but we will continue to monitor the situation. As set out in by the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs in his speech on 20 July, later this autumn we will be launching a new consultation on changing our approach to environmental assessment and mitigation in the planning system

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ CDC: Hospitals

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[76090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2020 to Question 54991 on CDC Group: Hospitals, what the total initial investment value into those hospitals was.

James Duddridge:

The total initial investment value of these investments was approximately \$190 million.

■ Department for International Development: Apprentices

Robert Halfon:

[\[74518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to reach the public sector apprenticeship target.

Nigel Adams:

DFID is committed to offering a range of apprenticeships to meet the public sector apprenticeship target.

Plans for our 2020 intake have been delayed whilst we respond to Covid-19, and establish the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office but we do expect to recruit a range of apprentices by the end of 2020.

Our apprenticeship schemes have been designed to be as inclusive as possible and encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to apply.

■ Developing Countries: Remittances

Ben Everitt:

[72278]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of (a) the implications for her policies of the statement by the World Bank that the single most important factor leading to high remittance prices is a lack of transparency in the market and (b) the effectiveness of the World Bank's methodology for calculating the (a) cost of remittances and (b) exchange rate margin as calculated from a publicly available interbank rate.

James Duddridge:

In May, the UK and Swiss Governments, with the support of the World Bank and other partners, launched a global Call to Action on remittances. This called on policymakers, regulators and remittance service providers to take action to keep remittances flowing during the crisis.

The Government has taken steps to support remittance service providers in the UK, including enabling them to remain open through lockdown by including them on the list of essential businesses.

Remittance prices are high for many reasons, including underdeveloped financial infrastructure in some countries, limited competition, regulatory obstacles, lack of access to the banking sector by remittance senders and/or receivers, and difficulties for migrants to obtain the necessary identification documentation to enter the financial mainstream.

The Government recognises that transparency is an important factor leading to high remittances prices. We are working to improve price transparency for consumers with the Treasury, the FCA and the industry.

In the remittances market, the total cost might not always be clear to customers as there are a number of variable factors including: the transaction fee, the exchange rate applied and the margin and speed of the service. We are working on ways to support increasing transparency of data so it is clear for the remitter and receiver how the total cost is calculated.

The World Bank Remittances Prices Worldwide (RPW) reports uses example transactions of \$200 and \$500 to illustrate the overall charge for sending this money in percentage terms. However, capturing this cost can be challenging as some costs can be hidden, especially where host country's currencies are not directly convertible into the recipient's country's currency.

The World Bank methodology uses the inter-bank rate that is published by central banks as a reference point and this is generally a reliable data point for exchange rates. However, some countries have multiple exchange range windows which may not be captured by the inter-bank rates.

We find the World Bank's methodology adequate and their data informative, however we recognise that some remittance service providers do not consider this an accurate representation of their charges. This could be due to several factors. We are working with the industry to improve data accuracy.

■ Education: Disability

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[73818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the education of children with disabilities in countries eligible for Official Development Assistance.

Wendy Morton:

Before the pandemic, children with disabilities were already among the most marginalised. Emerging evidence suggests the impact of COVID-19 on their education will be significant in ODA eligible countries. Many children with disabilities are excluded from remote learning and as they lack assisted learning devices at home, accessible content and one-to-one support.

That is why the UK's Ed Tech Hub is working to ensure distance education is inclusive for all learners, including those with disabilities. Through our flagship Girls' Education Challenge Fund and the Inclusive Education Initiative, we are supporting children with disabilities to access quality education and building the evidence base on how to do this most effectively. And we will lend our full weight to global efforts, including the UNICEF-led campaign to ensure *all* children can return to school when it is safe to do so, and children with disabilities are not left behind.

■ Education: Females

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[73817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the delivery of 12 years of quality education for every girl in each Official Development Assistance-eligible country.

Wendy Morton:

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the global learning crisis, especially for the most marginalised. It has been estimated that, at the peak of school closures, 1.3 billion children – 650 million girls - were removed from primary and secondary education. Girls face particular vulnerabilities that mean the most disadvantaged girls are at risk of dropping out of school permanently. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls' education in developing countries is becoming increasingly clear. From a learning perspective, closures – even with mitigating actions - will significantly reduce learning hours. The effects of school closures in developing countries are also much wider than reduced learning. For many disadvantaged children in developing countries, school closures expose them to increased hunger and malnutrition as well as increased risk of violence against women and girls.

The UK remains committed to 12 years of quality education for all girls. In our most recent published spend of ODA in 2018, our UK Bilateral ODA spend was £686 million and our UK Multilateral ODA spend was £293.7 million. We understand our leadership on girls' education is more urgent and important than ever. DFID is adapting its bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. The UK has announced £20 million for the UN Children's Fund crisis appeal, which includes education, and a further £5 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund to support emergency education in fragile contexts. The Global Partnership for Education, to which the UK is the largest donor, is flexing over £200 million to support education sector stability in response to the pandemic. We are also supporting efforts by UNICEF and others to support children back to school when it is safe to do so.

Our education response to the pandemic is two-fold, firstly to ensure preventative measures are taken to keep girls learning and returning to education, mitigating short term risks by focussing on safety, nutrition, wellbeing and the continuity of learning whilst schools are closed. Secondly, by supporting countries to protect and maintain their education budgets and ensuring that we build back better.

■ Education: Refugees

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[73819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of covid-19 on the adequacy of the education of refugees in Official Development Assistant-eligible countries.

Wendy Morton:

COVID-19 is an education crisis as well as a health crisis, particularly for refugee children who, even before this unprecedented global pandemic, made up the largest group of those out of school. Today, we know that refugee education is a major gap in the COVID-19 response. The longer refugee children are out of school, the less likely they are to return, which is why the UK, as a leading donor to education in emergencies, is determined that refugee children should have the opportunity to rebuild their lives and achieve their full potential.

In response the UK has just announced a new £5.3 million commitment to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to enable more than 5500 teachers to provide vital education for refugee children in 10 countries over the crucial next seven months. In April the UK provided an additional £5 million to Education Cannot Wait to keep the most vulnerable children, including refugees, safe and learning during COVID-19. And we will lend our full weight to global efforts, including the UNICEF-led campaign, to ensure all children can return to school when it is safe to do so, including refugee children.

■ Gambia: Human Rights

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[73742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to victims' organisations and other civil society groups working on transitional justice issues in the Gambia.

James Duddridge:

The UK regularly discusses the transitional justice process with the Government of The Gambia. A DFID programme, delivered by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, we are working to transform the National Assembly of The Gambia into a robust institution. This includes a particular focus on increasing government accountability and enhancing political inclusion among marginalised groups. The UK has also provided funding through the International Centre for Transitional Justice for an outreach programme to raise awareness and promote engagement and inclusion in The Gambia.

■ Gender: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[75999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much and what proportion of her Departments budget was spend on projects with that were (a) not-gender related and (b) had a gender equality focus as a (a) principal and (b) significant objective in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

All of DFID's aid activities reported to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are screened against the gender equality policy marker. This is a measurement of the proportion of aid that supports gender equality and women's empowerment. An activity can be marked as 'principal' if gender equality is the main objective of the programme, or as a 'significant' if gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the programme.

DFID's spend on bilateral allocable activities targeting gender equality is made publicly available through the [OECD statistics portal](#). The latest figures available are for 2018 which show that £4.2 billion of DFID's total bilateral spend was marked principal or significant (66%).

These world-leading investments are delivering results at scale. Between 2015 and 2019, DFID reached 50.6 million women of childbearing age, children under 5 and adolescent girls through our nutrition-relevant programmes and supported 5.8 million girls gain access to a decent education. Last year, UK aid gave 23.5 million of the world's poorest women and girls access to vital, voluntary family planning.

■ Overseas Aid: Environment Protection**Sarah Champion:**[\[75338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office plan to take to ensure that allocations of aid will contribute to environmentally sustainable development as set out on the (a) Millennium Development Goals and (b) the International Development Act 2006.

James Duddridge:

As the only G7 country to spend 0.7% of GNI on overseas development, the UK remains committed to environmentally sustainable development set out in the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in 2015. We will continue also to report on our aid expenditure as required by the International Development Act 2006.

Climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss all pose a threat to sustainability – with the poorest and most vulnerable most at risk. In September 2019 the Prime Minister committed to doubling the UK's International Climate Finance over the next five years. The UK is prioritising protecting the environment and reversing biodiversity loss in line with the Government's manifesto. Uniting development and diplomacy in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will provide an opportunity for the UK to have even greater impact in this area and on other development priorities.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Gin: USA****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[75467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations her Department has made to the US Government on the proposed imposition of tariffs on gin from the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

HM Government takes the negative impact of US tariffs very seriously. These tariffs are unnecessary, unhelpful and harm industry on both sides of the Atlantic.

HM Government continues to raise the issue of tariffs with the highest levels of the United States administration at every opportunity. On 10 July, my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade engaged the US Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, on how the potential tariffs being consulted on would threaten the United Kingdom gin industry. Instead of escalating existing tariffs, we need to work together towards a negotiated settlement.

■ Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique

Kate Osamor:

[76075]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department conducted an independent assessment of the potential effect of UK Export Finance's support for Total's LNG Project in Mozambique on (a) human rights and (b) the environment.

Graham Stuart:

In line with its regular policy, UK Export Finance (UKEF) has undertaken an environmental, social and human rights (ESHR) review of the Mozambique LNG Project. This was undertaken in strict alignment with international frameworks for managing such ESHR risks and impacts. UKEF's review was conducted alongside other export credit agencies and the African Development Bank, with the support of an independent ESHR consultant. This review considered all the relevant ESHR documentation provided by the Project sponsors such as ESHR impact assessments, strategies, management and monitoring plans amongst others and included studies undertaken since the publication of the Project's impact assessment.

UKEF published, in August 2019, a Category A notice of its consideration of the Project which includes a link to an Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) of the Mozambique LNG project and related information. In undertaking its review, UKEF considered the most up-to-date ESHIA. The Category A notice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/category-a-project-under-consideration-mozambique-lng-project>

Kate Osamor:

[76076]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department conducted an independent assessment of the effect of UK Export Finance's support for Total's LNG Project in Mozambique on poverty reduction.

Graham Stuart:

As Mozambique is progressively emerging from debt distress, UK Export Finance (UKEF) support is subject to meeting the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Sustainable Lending Principles, which include a consideration of the economic and social development benefits of the Project to Mozambique. The Department for International Development provided confirmation that these benefits would be met by the Project.

The Project is directly supported by the African Development Bank. The World Bank and IMF are supportive of the Project. All three of these organisations are leading international financing institutions with developmental mandates and goals.

JUSTICE**■ Prisons: Discipline**

Mary Glendon: [\[75312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many incidents of active concerted indiscipline have been reported at each prison establishment in each of the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The attached table shows the number of incidents of concerted indiscipline, both active and passive, over the last 12 months per establishment. As a total there have been 104 incidents of concerted indiscipline in this time period. 85 of these were active and 19 were passive.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 75312 - Concerted Indiscipline July 2019 - June 2020.xlsx]

■ Prisons: Drugs

Mary Glendon: [\[75310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, , how many drug finds have been reported at each prison establishment in each of the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of drug finds in prison each month and the type of drug is published annually in the HMPPS Annual Digest. We cannot give data out that is due for publication. Figures for 2018/19 were published in July 2019. Figures for 2019/20 are not yet published and will be published in the Annual Digest on 30th July. This will include data for January to March 2020. Data for the remainder of 2020 will follow in the 2020/21 Annual Digest to be published next year.

■ Prisons: Mobile Phones

Mary Glendon: [\[75311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many illicit (a) mobile phones, and (b) SIM cards have been discovered and reported at each prison establishment in each of the last 12 months.

Lucy Frazer:

The number of mobile phone and SIM card finds in prison each month is published annually in the HMPPS Annual Digest. We cannot give data out that is due for publication. Figures for 2018/19 were published in July 2019. Figures for 2019/20 are not yet published and will be published in the Annual Digest on 30th July. This will include data for January to March 2020. Data for the remainder of 2020 will follow in the 2020/21 Annual Digest to be published next year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Integrated Schools: Northern Ireland

Stephen Farry:

[\[73994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will outline the current rules and requirements on the Northern Ireland Executive utilising the Fresh Start Agreement resources allocated for shared and integrated education.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government, through the Fresh Start and Stormont House Agreements, provided a contribution of up to £500m over 10 years of new capital funding to support shared and integrated education.

The Government remains committed to providing all of this funding for the purposes for which it was originally intended. We will continue to work with the Northern Ireland Executive and HM Treasury to ensure this can be profiled in the most effective way.

This support will help overcome divisions in Northern Ireland and benefit thousands of children through new and better facilities.

The Government is pleased to note that the restored Executive has made progress on delivering this important initiative, with 27 major capital projects being progressed under the Fresh Start programme in the current financial year.

SCOTLAND

■ Coronavirus: Scotland

Mhairi Black:

[\[75357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what comparative assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the lockdown restrictions that have been implemented due to the covid-19 outbreak in Scotland and England.

Mr Alister Jack:

All four nations of the UK entered lockdown at the same point, and the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have all gradually eased public health restrictions at the point their Ministers have judged best, in accordance with the devolution settlements. There is more to be done to tackle the virus and while the UK Government is adapting in light of the evidence so far, it is premature to review comprehensively the effectiveness of the lockdown restrictions across the UK.

The UK Government works closely with the Devolved Administrations on tackling Covid-19 and has allocated around £4.6 billion to support public services in Scotland, alongside an unprecedented package of UK-wide support for businesses and individuals, including the furlough and self-employed support scheme which have made the lockdown possible and supported nearly 900,000 jobs across Scotland.

■ Devolution: Scotland

Mhairi Black: [\[75362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament during the transition period.

Mr Alister Jack:

From January 2021, powers in over 100 policy areas previously exercised at an EU level will flow directly to the Scottish Parliament, reinforcing its standing as one of the most powerful devolved parliaments in the world. I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters relating to Scottish devolution and the transition period.

■ Domestic Visits: Paisley and Renfrewshire South

Mhairi Black: [\[75359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether he has visited Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency since his appointment.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have not yet enjoyed the opportunity to visit the Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency.

I would of course consider very carefully any invitation from the Hon. Member to visit the Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency at the appropriate time.

Mhairi Black: [\[75360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, when he plans to visit Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency.

Mr Alister Jack:

I currently have no plans to visit Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency in my capacity as Secretary of State for Scotland.

■ Scotland Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Mhairi Black: [\[75361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Prime Minister in his capacity as Minister for the Union.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have regular discussions with the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters relating to strengthening Scotland's place in the Union.

■ Scots Gaelic Language

Sir Edward Davey: [\[72792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, whether his Department produces documents available to the public in both English and Gaelic.

Mr Alister Jack:

In accordance with statutory requirement, and with due consideration for the principle of value for money to the taxpayer, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland publishes documents in English only.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus**Mhairi Black:**[\[75356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what comparative assessment he has made of the Newly Self-employed Hardship Fund that was made available in Scotland compared and the support available to the self-employed during the covid-19 outbreak in England.

Mr Alister Jack:

As the Newly Self-employed hardship fund is administered by the Scottish Government, the UK Government does not hold information on data relating to this scheme. Through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme available across the UK, people have claimed £7.7 billion (including 155,000 self-employed people in Scotland receiving £449 million) and it remains open for applications for the second and final grant until 19 October.

■ Sovereignty: Scotland**Mhairi Black:**[\[75363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on Scottish independence.

Mr Alister Jack:

The UK Government will continue to uphold the democratic decision of the Scottish people who voted decisively in 2014 to remain part of the United Kingdom. I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters relating to strengthening Scotland's place in the Union.

TRANSPORT**■ Aircraft: Electric Motors****Sir Graham Brady:**[\[73711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support research into (a) improving aircraft efficiency and (b) new technologies to enable electric and hybrid powered flight.

Sir Graham Brady:[\[73713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the carbon emissions reductions that could be achieved in the next (a) five and (b) 10 years from (i) more sustainable aviation fuels, (ii) more efficient aircraft, (iii) hybrid and electric flight and (iv) airspace modernisation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The focus of our policy development and analysis to date has been on ways to meet our 2050 net zero carbon commitment. We have not specifically made an assessment of the savings that could be made if the focus were the next five or ten years, but we continue to develop policies to reduce emissions over both the short term and the medium term.

The Transport Secretary recently announced the Jet Zero Council, which will provide leadership and strategic direction to cut aviation emissions. The Council will focus on developing UK capabilities to deliver zero emission flight.

Through the Aerospace Growth Partnership, Government and industry are committing a total of £3.9bn in funding for mid-stage aerospace research and development between 2013 and 2026.

DfT's Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition makes £20 million of capital funding available for projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels for use in aircraft and heavy goods vehicles. This government funding will be matched by the private sector, and is expected to support construction of first-of-a-kind plants by 2021. The sustainable aviation fuel produced in these plants is expected to have emissions savings of at least 70% when compared to traditional jet fuel.

■ Airports: Coronavirus**Paul Maynard:**[\[73778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on connectivity from each UK airport.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department has been speaking regularly to airport operators and airlines to understand the effect COVID-19 has had on connectivity as part of our engagement on restart and recovery in the sector.

We will continue to work closely with the industry, to understand how the aviation sector is recovering. This will support government in developing a clear recovery plan for aviation that considers the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on regional connectivity from each UK airport.

■ Airspace**Sir Graham Brady:**[\[73712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has for airspace modernisation.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Airspace modernisation is vital to the future of aviation, to delivering net zero and, now, to supporting the aviation sector's recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a critical infrastructure programme of national importance.

However, in light of the pandemic, we recognise that the timescales in which airspace modernisation will take place will change. We are working with the CAA to review the Airspace Modernisation Strategy, to consider the recommendations from ACOG's recent report 'Remobilising the Airspace Change Programme', and will advise stakeholders of our preferred approach in the early Autumn.

■ Aviation and Package Holidays: Repayments

Ben Lake:

[\[76094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that refunds for cancelled (a) flights and (b) holidays are more easily accessible.

Ben Lake:

[\[76095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that online travel agents are able to access customer refunds from airlines to ensure they meet their legal obligation to refund customers within seven days.

Kelly Tolhurst:

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.

Furthermore, the Competition Markets Authority launched its COVID-19 Taskforce in April to identify, monitor and respond to competition and consumer problems arising from coronavirus and the measures taken to contain it. Where there is evidence that businesses have breached competition or consumer protection law, the CMA will take enforcement action if warranted.

The Department has been clear that airlines should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund, if it is requested and this should be done in a timely manner.

The Department has also recently acted to ensure that if ATOL-protected holidaymakers who have package holidays including a flight accept refund credit notes rather than a cash refund for their cancelled holiday as a result of COVID-19, they will be protected by the ATOL scheme if necessary even if the company they have booked with later collapses.

By providing confidence to holidaymakers that their refund credit notes are protected if they choose them over refunds, this will mean customers are able to support the travel sector's recovery from the pandemic by accepting a refund credit note.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Paul Maynard:

[\[73777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has undertaken an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the aviation (a) sector and (b) supply chain.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Before the impact of COVID-19, the UK aviation sector, including air transport and aerospace, directly employed around 230,000 people and supported around 500,000 jobs in total, including the jobs supported through its purchase of goods and services along its supply chain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a sharp contraction in aviation demand, which has created large revenue losses for airlines, airports and companies along the aviation supply chain. The sector has responded to falling revenues by taking action to cut costs.

The Department keeps impacts of Covid-19 on the transport sector under regular review and recognises the importance of the aviation sector to the UK economy. As a result, a series of measures have already been introduced.

The aviation sector can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

The Department also influenced the airport flight slot usage rules at the start of the pandemic, enabling airlines to cut their services without penalty and protect the environment from unnecessary flying.

The Government has also commenced a policy of 'travel corridors', a risk-based alternative to blanket self-isolation requirements with lower risk countries.

We are working with the sector to enable its restart.

■ Aviation: Electronic Commerce**Ben Lake:**[\[76096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a trust account model for flight bookings made through online travel agents.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of challenges. Going forward, the department is keen to work with the regulator, industry and consumer groups on potential options for strengthening our schemes and models.

The Department has recently acted to ensure that if ATOL-protected holidaymakers who have package holidays including a flight accept refund credit notes rather than a cash refund for their cancelled holiday as a result of COVID-19, they will be protected by the ATOL scheme if necessary even if the company they have booked with later collapses.

By providing confidence to holidaymakers that their refund credit notes are protected if they choose them over refunds, this will mean customers are able to support the travel sector's recovery from the pandemic by accepting a refund credit note.

■ Aviation: Renewable Fuels

Sir Graham Brady:

[73710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support the commercialisation of sustainable aviation fuel in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

To help overcome barriers to the production of sustainable fuels for aviation on a commercial scale, the Department's Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition (F4C) makes capital funding available. As part of the competition we are currently supporting two projects to build plants capable of supplying advanced fuels for use in aviation.

In addition, the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), a certificate trading scheme, promotes a market for low carbon fuels. Sustainable aviation fuels are eligible for support under the RTFO and are categorised as a development fuel, so potentially benefit from a higher tradeable certificate value.

On 12 June the Department announced the Jet Zero Council to create a partnership between industry and Government and bring together Ministers and CEO-level stakeholders to drive high ambition in the delivery of new technologies and innovative ways to cut aviation emissions. The Council will be jointly chaired by the Secretary of State for Transport and the Secretary of State for BEIS.

■ Aviation: Repayments

Ben Lake:

[76093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on (a) introducing regulations to ensure that customer funds cannot be withheld by airlines and (b) ensuring airlines comply with CAA's requirements when issuing refunds for cancelled flights.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Department and the Civil Aviation Authority has been clear that airlines should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund, if it is requested.

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.

The Department has also recently acted to ensure that if ATOL-protected holidaymakers who have package holidays including a flight accept refund credit notes rather than a cash refund for their cancelled holiday as a result of COVID-19, they will be protected by the ATOL scheme if necessary even if the company they have booked with later collapses.

By providing confidence to holidaymakers that their refund credit notes are protected if they choose them over refunds, this will mean customers are able to support the travel sector's recovery from the pandemic by accepting a refund credit note.

■ **Bus Services: Suffolk**

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[73787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding he has allocated to bus companies operating local routes in Suffolk to ensure that key routes are not closed as a result of limits on passenger numbers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[73788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department plans to allocate to Suffolk County Council to ensure that local bus routes provide an adequate service to (a) people commuting to work and (b) children travelling to school during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

During this period of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty, the bus industry has played a critical role in keeping Britain moving. On 23 May, the Transport Secretary announced a further £283 million in funding – of this, £254 million was for buses and £29 million for light rail – as part of the Government's efforts to help protect and increase bus and light rail services. This is in addition to a funding package totalling £397 million announced in April.

Suffolk County Council to date have received funding totalling £416,712 from the Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG).

The Department is working with the Department for Education as a matter of urgency to explore options to increase capacity to ensure students can get to school or college in September, and manage the expected increased demand for public transport that this will bring. This includes seeking to provide travel demand management support to local authorities in England outside London. However, it is clear that solutions must be locally led between transport authorities and operators.

■ **Buses: Exhaust Emissions**

John McNally: [\[73876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking ensure that funding from his Department for the ultra-low emissions bus scheme is released to transport operators by September 2020 to protect jobs in that sector.

Rachel Maclean:

The Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme (ULEBS) awarded £48 million across 19 local authorities and bus operators, and will support 263 zero emission buses and infrastructure. To release the funding to operators, government must be presented with evidence of purchase of the vehicles.

More recently the Government has announced £5 billion of new funding to overhaul bus and cycling links across England outside of London, which includes funding for at least 4,000 new zero-emission buses.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Safety Measures**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[74452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether it remains the Government's policy to implement the EU (a) general safety regulations and (b) pedestrian safety regulations that will take effect in the EU from 2022.

Rachel Maclean:

The package of European measures known as the General Safety Regulation includes vehicle construction requirements covering pedestrian safety and a range of additional new technologies. The Department for Transport was involved in developing these requirements but as they are scheduled to apply after we have left the EU, it will be for the British Government to decide whether to mandate the same systems in GB; no decision has yet been taken.

■ **Public Transport: Coronavirus**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[73761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to prevent individuals from removing their face coverings on public transport.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The regulation makes it mandatory for passengers to wear a face covering, if they are able to, whilst travelling on public transport in England. We are working closely with operators to ensure passengers follow this requirement closely but recognise that reasonable adjustments need to be made to allow people to eat or drink if necessary or they have a medical need to do so, to take essential medication, or there is a medical emergency.

If someone is not complying with the regulations, operators have new powers under the Public Health Act 1984 to deny access to a service or to direct someone to leave a service if they do not wear a face covering when asked to. As a final step, operators are able to involve police, including the British Transport Police, where there is a clear breach of the rules without a reasonable excuse.

□ ■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

Grahame Morris:

[\[75493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his letter to the Permanent Secretary of his Department of 20 March 2020 on urgent expenditure during the covid-19 outbreak, if he will publish the reasons given by his Department's Investment and Portfolio Committee for recommending Emergency Measures Agreements rather than extending the Operator of Last resort to maintain rail services during Covid-19.

Grahame Morris:

[\[75494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his letter to the Permanent Secretary of his Department on 20 March 2020 on urgent covid-19 expenditure, what estimate his Department's Investment and Portfolio Committee has made of the (a) total cost and (b) cost by franchise which would result from (i) extending the Operator of Last Resort to all rail operators and (ii) placing all rail operators onto Emergency Measures Agreements to maintain rail services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department's Investment, Portfolio and Delivery Committee considered the options to maintain services, including extending the Operator of Last Resort. Ministers agreed with the committee's recommendation to offer Emergency Measures Agreements to franchised train operators. Advice to Ministers is not normally published.

Grahame Morris:

[\[75495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his letter to the Permanent Secretary of his Department on 20 March 2020 on urgent covid-19 expenditure, what time period the estimated financial effect of £588 million relates to; and what the additional monthly financial effect was for the rail sector since the start of the 2020 financial year.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The £588 million is an estimate that relates to the month of March 2020. It was an estimate made part way through month itself as it became apparent that the Covid-19 pandemic would have a large and immediate impact on rail revenues. The Department is reviewing the data on payments made to train operators under the Emergency Measures Agreements since they were introduced. This information has not yet been finalised but will be published in due course.

■ Road Traffic Control

Bill Wiggin:

[\[73733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to ensure that local authorities compensate motorists for the closure of publicly funded roads.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department does not compensate motorists for the closure of roads. Roads are funded by general taxation for the benefit of all. Local authorities are responsible for managing their roads and have a wide range of measures available to them to do so, including road closures. They have various legal duties on them to manage their roads for all users, and 'traffic' is defined to include both cyclists and pedestrians.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Julian Sturdy:**[\[73814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how frequently his Department updates the list of counties not subject to covid-19 travel quarantine exemptions; and when he plans to next update that list.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Health Regulations relating to the self-isolation requirements remain under constant review, and are updated as required. The next formal review will be on 27 July 2020.

TREASURY**■ Adult Education: Finance****Karin Smyth:**[\[76059\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on estimating the potential resource requirement for retraining people who are no longer employed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will include investment in the adult skills budget in the next spending review.

Steve Barclay:

The Chancellor has had various discussions with Cabinet colleagues on education and skills, including retraining.

Decisions on departmental budgets beyond 2020-21 will be made at the Comprehensive Spending Review.

■ Aviation: Taxation**Sir Graham Brady:**[\[73714\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Transport on using fiscal measures to support the aviation industry's plans to decarbonise.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury remains in close dialogue with other government departments, including the Department for Transport, in designing policies to support decarbonisation.

The government keeps fiscal policies under review and changes are made at fiscal events. The Chancellor confirmed at the Summer Economic Update that the next Budget will take place in the Autumn.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[76040]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether employers can keep workers on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until the end of October 2020 whose fixed-term contracts are due to end in November 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has ensured that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is available for as many people as possible. Hence, employees can be on any type of contract and be eligible to be furloughed under the CJRS.

From August 2020, the level of the grant will be tapered slowly to reflect that people will be returning to work. An employer can continue to claim for all employees furloughed for 21 days before 30 June as long as any single claim period does not exceed the maximum number of employees they claimed for under any claim before 30 June.

Further information on eligibility for the CJRS can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-which-employees-you-can-put-on-furlough-to-use-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson:

[76124]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has established a second wave economic support plan to prepare for a potential second wave of covid-19 (a) infections and (b) lockdowns.

John Glen:

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government delivered one of the most generous and comprehensive packages of economic support globally, protecting people's incomes and supporting businesses.

The Government has since set out a phased, cautious approach to reopening our economy to minimise the risk of a second peak of the virus, and has produced COVID-19 secure [practical guidelines](#) to support businesses to reopen and for workers to feel confident, safe and empowered to return to work. Public Health England, the Joint Biosecurity Centre and NHS Test and Trace constantly monitor levels of infection across the country, and will work with local authorities to implement additional measures if needed.

On 8 July the Chancellor set out a package of measures to support jobs across the UK, including a Job Retention Bonus to help firms keep furloughed workers and a new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people. The Chancellor has announced support for those sectors hardest hit, with a £1.57 billion package for the arts, and a cut in VAT to 5% for accommodation, attractions and the hospitality sector.

■ EDO MBM Technology

Caroline Lucas:

[\[73780\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the status is of HMRC's investigation into EDO MBM Technology Ltd's compliance with UK export controls; whether HMRC has had discussions with the Department for International Trade as part of that investigation; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are responsible for enforcing export controls on strategic goods and sanctions and investigating potential breaches of those controls. HMRC cannot disclose information about an identifiable person. HMRC continue to work closely with DIT on export control matters.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Mick Whitley:

[\[76120\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support will be available for people who are extremely clinically vulnerable and unable to return to work after 1 August 2020 because they cannot work from home and their workplace cannot be made covid-secure.

Jesse Norman:

On 22 June, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will relax the current public health guidance for those identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to shield at home. This means from 1 August they will be able to return to work if they are unable to work from home, provided their workplace is COVID-safe.

It is important that this group continue to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work from home where this is possible, including moving them to another role if required. Where this is not possible, the CEV should be provided with the safest on-site roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the CEV will continue to have access to an unprecedented package of financial support. This is not limited to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, but also includes the introduction of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £9.3bn according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[76000\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much of the £2 billion Green Homes Grant in England is new funding; how much the Welsh Government will receive in Barnett consequential; and if will make a statement.

Steve Barclay:

As part of the Plan for Jobs, the Chancellor announced over £3 billion of new funding for green buildings, including a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to upgrade people's homes.

This funding is subject to Barnett. We are working with DAs to make sure they have information about likely changes in Barnett funding so they can plan their own spending.

Individual Savings Accounts**Karin Smyth:**[\[76055\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on amending the terms of the Lifetime ISA.

John Glen:

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

The government keeps all aspects of savings and tax policy under review as part of the process of policy development and delivery. The government has recently amended the terms of the Lifetime ISA to support savers during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 1 May 2020 the government announced that the Lifetime ISA withdrawal charge will be reduced temporarily to 20% from 25% for any unauthorised withdrawal made between 6 March 2020 and 5 April 2021 recouping the government bonus and any interest or growth that may have accrued on that bonus, but with no further charge.

Mortgages**Drew Hendry:**[\[76069\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning the sale of mortgage books to lenders who are (a) unregulated and (b) do not offer new mortgages.

John Glen:

In all government-owned (ex-Bradford & Bingley and Northern Rock) United Kingdom Asset Resolution (UKAR) sales, customer treatment is a key consideration for UKAR and the government in selecting a bidder and all bidders have to agree to UKAR's customer treatment conditions in order for their bid to be considered. This is a strict requirement, not open to negotiation, and is considered before bids are assessed on price. The purchaser is obliged to ensure the servicer of the mortgages is regulated by the FCA. For the latest asset sale and future sales the legal title holder must also be FCA-regulated. This is a contractual requirement.

Range of buyers, including active lenders, will be invited to participate in any future UKAR asset sales and we will continue to require bidders agree to our robust customer protections. However, selling UKAR assets to active lenders does not guarantee that customers would be able to access new products.

It is a legal requirement that all owner-occupied mortgages must be serviced by an administrator that is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This means that customers are protected by the FCA's Mortgages and Home Finance: Conduct of Business rules, and that customers have recourse to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS).

Drew Hendry:

[76070]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating an independent tribunal service to oversee mortgage (a) lending practices and (b) customer complaints.

John Glen:

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) supervises the conduct of mortgage lenders and intermediaries through regulations. The FCA's day-to-day operations are independent from Government control and influence. The FCA will take action against lenders and intermediaries that are found to be in breach of the FCA rules. This can include warning a firm and requiring it to take action to ensure future breaches do not occur, imposing a fine on firms and requiring them to arrange for customers who have lost out to be compensated, and ultimately preventing a lender from undertaking any further mortgage lending activity.

The Government is determined that borrowers are treated fairly by their lenders. Any dispute arising between a lender and its customers is usually best resolved by the parties involved. If a consumer is not happy with their lender's response, they will be eligible to apply to have a further review conducted by the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The FOS provides a free, independent dispute resolution service for customers. Its decisions are binding on the firm concerned.

The FOS can be contacted by post at: Financial Ombudsman Service, Exchange Tower, London, E14 9SR, by telephone on 0800 023 4567, or through their website at www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk.

■ **Plastics: Taxation**

Alec Shelbrooke:

[73797]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to expedite the bringing forward of legislative proposals for a plastic packaging tax as a result of the (a) fall in global oil prices and (b) the rise in the level of production of virgin plastic in order to protect the financial viability of recycling companies in the UK.

Kemi Badenoch:

At Budget 2020, the Government announced key details of the world leading Plastic Packaging Tax, which will help to tackle the pressing issue of plastic waste. The initial rate of the tax will be £200 per tonne and it will be paid by manufacturers and importers of plastic packaging that contains less than 30% recycled plastic.

The Government is continuing to monitor both the global oil price and recycling capacity in the UK. The Government expects the tax to create greater demand for

recycled material and in turn stimulate increased levels of recycling and collection of plastic waste. Since the announcement of the tax at Budget 2018 there has been increased investment in the UK's recycling capacity, partly due to the tax.

The Government has set a rate of £200 per tonne for the tax as this is expected to make using recycled plastic the most cost-effective option for a business in many cases. Following its introduction in April 2022, the rate will be kept under review to ensure that the tax remains effective in increasing the use of recycled plastic in plastic packaging.

The Government is now consulting on the detailed design and implementation of the tax, and will publish draft primary legislation before it is included in a future Finance Bill, followed by draft secondary legislation and guidance. It is right that the Government consults on the detail of the tax in this manner to make sure it works as intended and that businesses are given time to prepare.

■ Public Works Loan Board

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[76125\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the (a) combined value and (b) annual interest payment is for Public Works Loan Board borrowing for each local authority, not including town and parish councils in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) Scotland.

Kemi Badenoch:

The following table details the principal balance outstanding as of 30 June 2020, and the interest payments due in 2020-21, for all Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans held by principal local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

	PRINCIPAL BALANCE OUTSTANDING AT 30 JUNE 2020	INTEREST REPAYMENTS IN 2020-21
England	£70,230 million	£2,403 million
Scotland	£10,572 million	£418 million
Wales	£4,625 million	£194 million
Total	£85,427 million	£3,014 million

■ Treasury: Written Questions

Neil Gray:

[\[76039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to Question 71791, tabled by the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts on 9 July 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

I replied to the hon. Member on 17 July 2020.

■ UK Customs Academy

Rachel Reeves:

[\[76008\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of traders who have used the UK Customs Academy.

Jesse Norman:

The online UK Customs Academy training centre (where the Government has directly procured training capacity) has delivered 1,139 courses so far. This is just one of several companies providing training for customs intermediaries in the UK.

■ UK Relations with EU

Rachel Reeves:

[\[76006\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to The Border with the European Union: Importing and Exporting Goods, published on 13 July 2020, what estimate he has made of the number of business who will need to use a customs intermediary in January 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The vast majority of the UK's rest-of-world traders use an agent or intermediary to comply with customs formalities and manage their logistics and transport needs. Based on this, the Government expects that intermediaries will play an essential role as the majority of UK businesses trading with the EU will want to use their services to facilitate the import/export process.

There are a number of different types of customs declarations depending on how goods are moved and under which procedure. It is estimated that traders will need to make c.156-172m additional declarations. HMRC expect most businesses to use an intermediary to do this (eg. a freight forwarder, fast-parcel operator or a customs agent) as over 90 per cent of rest-of-world traders currently use one.

Rachel Reeves:

[\[76007\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to The Border with the European Union: Importing and Exporting Goods, published on 13 July 2020, what assessment he has made of the potential cost to businesses of making customs declarations if they decide not to use a customs intermediary.

Jesse Norman:

There are a number of different types of customs declarations depending on how goods are moved and under which procedure.

The latest published estimates are in the third edition impact assessment from December 2018, which are based on historic data. The estimates of the range are between £20-£56 for import declarations, and £15-£46 for export declarations.

The final costs of completing customs declarations will vary significantly from business to business depending on how often they trade, and how they choose to

fulfil customers' requirements; some will use an intermediary while others will do it themselves.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Peter Aldous: [\[905161\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to ensure economic opportunity for women as the economy reopens and covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mims Davies:

We came into this pandemic with a record employment rate for women at 72.9% to the end March 2020, and our measures so far have protected millions of jobs.

The Government has launched a plan for jobs to Get Britain Back into Work, targeting support to get those who can, back into work as quickly as possible. We will work to provide more intensive support for those who are further away from the labour market.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon: [\[905164\]](#)

What assessment the Government has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on disabled people.

Mims Davies:

The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

We continue to monitor and understand the impact of the pandemic on people who are disabled or have a health condition by using both existing and new data sources.

■ Equality: Staffordshire

Jonathan Gullis: [\[73990\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has for the Government's Equality Hub to help tackle (a) geographical and (b) socio-economic inequality in (i) Stoke-on-Trent and (ii) Staffordshire.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Prime Minister has set out our vision to level up and spread opportunity and I want the Equality Hub to look at issues such as geography and social background to identify barriers to success.

The Government has introduced unprecedented support for business and workers across all regions of the UK, including Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, to protect them against the current economic crisis. We will support jobs in every region, and invest in our towns, cities, people and places.

The forthcoming Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper will set out the place-based regional economic strategy. This will build on regional partnerships like the Midlands Engine which promotes the global footprint of our regions and the economic opportunities within.

■ Ethnic Groups: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[\[69665\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to ensure BAME women are not disproportionately affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

This Government is working to support all people through COVID-19, including BAME women. Guided by medical and scientific expertise, we have implemented specific measures to reduce the spread of the virus in all communities for everyone including women from BAME backgrounds.

This Government has taken unprecedented steps to support lives and livelihoods, including increasing the generosity of Universal Credit, introducing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and made changes to ensure women do not miss out on parental leave and childcare support. We continue to engage with women's charities both local and national, and have made available an additional £76 million announced in May, to support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, modern slavery, and vulnerable children and their families.

The Public Health England (PHE) report, "COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes", published on 2 June 2020, looks at the COVID-19 mortality rates of different ethnic groups. I am now leading further work to build on this by analysing the key drivers of disparities in COVID-19 outcomes, the relationships between different risk factors, and what can be done to close the gap, for BAME men and women. This work is supported by the Race Disparity Unit in the Cabinet Office. The recommendations in the second PHE report "Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups" published on 16 June are also being taken forward as part of the terms of reference announced by myself on 4 June.

■ Females: New Businesses

Katherine Fletcher:

[\[905166\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to support female entrepreneurs after the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

For those already self-employed, the Department for Work and Pensions has temporarily removed the minimum income floor, and HM Treasury has introduced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

For those wanting to start a new business, the DWP New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) programme offers dedicated, specialised support to those entering into, or wanting to grow their business.

Since 2011, the NEA has supported over 54,000 women to set-up a new business.

■ Females: STEM Subjects

Mark Pawsey:

[\[905165\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the effect of trends in the level of take-up of STEM subjects by girls in secondary schools on occupational gender segregation.

Kemi Badenoch:

Since 2010, there has been a 31% increase in girls' entries to STEM A levels in England, and there are now one million women working in core STEM occupations. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of women accepted onto full-time STEM undergraduate courses also increased by 34% in the UK.

However, while women remain underrepresented, this Government will continue to tackle occupational segregation by ensuring that more women are equipped to enter STEM careers.

■ Gender Recognition: Clinics

Gill Furniss:

[\[67724\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the date on which gender identity clinics may return to full functionality.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Minister for Women and Equalities has written to Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, and Dr Michael Brady, National LGBT Health Advisor, to ask what can be done to ensure that gender identity clinics can still provide their necessary services for transgender service users.

We are aware that the impact of COVID-19 may reduce access to gender identity clinics, as gender identity clinics have complied with national advice to prevent face-to-face contact where possible.

The NHS has advised GPs to consider putting all suitable patients on electronic repeat dispensing, with appropriate arrangements in place for monitoring and blood tests that are clinically necessary. I am informed that services will be back to normal as soon as possible.

■ Racial Discrimination

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[69675\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to announce the chair of the Government's cross-governmental commission on racism and discrimination announced on 14 June 2020.

Marsha De Cordova:

[69676]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, who will comprise the membership of the Government's cross-governmental commission to look at racism and discrimination announced on 14 June 2020.

Marsha De Cordova:

[69677]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the terms of reference are for the Government's cross-governmental commission to look at racism and discrimination announced on 14 June 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the hon. Member to the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) made by the Prime Minister on 16 July 2020.

The new Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities announced on 14 June will examine continuing race and ethnic disparities in Britain. The aim of the Commission is to set out a new, positive agenda for change - balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness for all. The Commission will be chaired by Dr Tony Sewell (CBE).

A list of commissioners and the Commission's ambitious Terms of Reference, has been placed in the library of both Houses. Commissioners will be supported by a secretariat in the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit and will submit their report by the end of the year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Conditions of Employment

Neil Gray:

[73857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Chancellor's summer economic update of 8 July, if he will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to bring forward a fair terms and conditions package for staff in the Department of Work and Pensions in response to the high staff turnover in that Department.

Mims Davies:

An Institute for Government report on Civil Service turnover, published last year, highlighted that overall turnover in large delivery departments such as DWP is much lower than other parts of the Civil Service, with a stable front-line workforce, in for example job centres.

In 2015, the Department secured additional pay flexibility that enabled us to begin to reform pay structures for grades AA to HEO. Over a 4-year period, 2016 through to 2019, pay increases above the limits set within the Civil Service pay guidance were provided, in exchange for AA to HEO employees agreeing to modernised terms and conditions to support the Department's service transformation – the 'Employee Deal'.

The modernised terms and conditions, including improvements to working patterns and flexible working, enabled us to extend our operating and opening hours.

The work to modernise terms and conditions continues, further extending our operating and opening hours being one of the many things we are doing to modernise DWP, so that whenever customers need us we are able to provide a complete, end-to-end service that meets their needs as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exceptional surge in demand for our services. In response, we have secured funding from HM Treasury to embark upon an exercise to recruit 13,500 work coaches in Jobcentre Plus before the end of this financial year.

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Recycling

Geraint Davies: [73690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Health and Safety Executive on protecting the health of workers in recycling businesses who are exposed to flame retardant chemicals when stripping down end-of-life sofas and mattresses.

Geraint Davies: [73691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Health and Safety Executive on taking steps to protect the health of workers in the UK furniture manufacturing business who are exposed to flame retardant chemicals when cutting and sewing chemically saturated fabrics and foams.

Mims Davies:

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) outline specific duties on employers to protect workers from harmful substances, such as foams and flame retardants, which may be contained in soft furnishings such as mattresses and sofas. HSE provides practical advice and guidance on the basics of COSHH, completing COSHH assessments and links to industry specific information and guidance to prevent and control workplace exposure to harmful substances at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh>.

Furniture manufacturers buy upholstery materials that have already received treatment to meet specified ignition resistance levels and are suitably labelled. HSE has not specifically examined the issue of exposure to flame retardant chemicals when cutting and sewing these fabrics. Exposure to flame retardant chemicals from stripping end of life sofas and mattresses is not a known issue in the waste and recycling industry and no guidance has been produced on the topic by either HSE or the industry's own Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum.

■ Maternity Pay: Coronavirus

Mark Tami:

[75203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she intends to bring forward legislative proposals to protect the entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay of people who received Statutory Sick Pay during their qualifying period where (a) they have a shielding letter and (b) their employer declined to use the Job Retention Scheme.

Mims Davies:

Statutory Sick Pay forms part of the average weekly earnings calculation carried out by employers to determine whether an employee qualifies for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), and if so, at what rate. This is because, for SMP purposes, pay is defined as gross pay due before any deductions. This includes sick pay (and other payments e.g. overtime, bonus payments, arrears of pay).

There are currently no plans to change the way that SSP is treated as part of the average weekly earnings calculation for SMP.

■ Occupational Health: Coronavirus

Ian Murray:

[76001]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many reports of cases of covid-19 contracted in the workplace have been received by the Health and Safety Executive under the reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations for (a) hospitals, (b) GP practices, (c) community pharmacies, (d) residential nursing care facilities and (e) prisons in Scotland.

Mims Davies:

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), duty-holders are obliged to report cases of a worker contracting COVID-19 when:

- a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work (reportable as an 'exposure to a biological agent' case of disease under Regulation 9(b));
- a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to COVID-19 and this is confirmed as the likely cause of death by a registered medical practitioner (reportable as a 'death due to exposure to a biological agent' case of disease under Regulation 6(2)).

Figures in the Table below only cover Scottish reports made, where the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the local authority are the enforcing body, and relate to the location of the premises where the affected person usually works, as reported by the employer.

Table: Worker COVID-19 Disease reports made by employers to HSE by disease severity and specific industry sector ¹, Scotland, 10th April – 11th July 2020

(Source: RIDDOR disease reporting)

SPECIFIC INDUSTRY SECTOR (AS REPORTED BY EMPLOYER) ¹	SIC ² CODE	TOTAL COVID-19 NOTIFICATIONS
Hospital activities	8610	24
General medical practice activities	8621	3
Dispensing chemist in specialised stores	4773	0
Residential nursing care activities	8710	288
Justice and judicial activities	8423	0
Grand Total		315

Footnotes

¹Industry as reported by employers.

²Standard Industrial Classification (SIC): The current system used in UK official statistics for classifying businesses by type of activity they are engaged in.

■ **Poverty: West Yorkshire**

Jon Trickett:

[\[74445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many in-work households were living in poverty in (a) Hemsworth constituency, (b) Wakefield Council area and (c) West Yorkshire Combined Authority area as at (i) 15 July 2010 and (ii) 15 July 2020.

Will Quince:

This information is not held.

■ **Social Security Benefits: Children**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[75365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who made a claim under the non-consensual sex exemption to the two child limit for (a) child tax credits and (b) universal credit have subsequently had that entitlement removed.

Alison Thewliss:

[\[75366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who have had a claim under the non-consensual sex exemption to the two child limit have had their claim for (a) child tax credits and (b) universal credit rejected.

Alison Thewliss:

[\[75367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the appeals process is for rejected claims under the non-consensual sex exemption to the two child limit for (a) child tax credits and (b) universal credit.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 21 July 2020]: There are no circumstances in which a claimant would be refused an exception where they meet the conditions and have provided relevant information to support their request. This includes contacting a suitable third party professional who can confirm that the claimant's circumstances, as described by them, are consistent with the criteria for the non-consensual conception exception.

The Department recognises the value that third-party professionals, including health care professionals, registered social workers, and relevant specialist charities can provide to claimants experiencing distressing events.

■ Universal Credit

Neil Gray:

[\[73858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to the Chancellor's summer economic update, what assessment she made of the adequacy of the childcare offer for universal credit claimants prior to that update.

Will Quince:

The Universal Credit (UC) childcare offer remains the same and working families can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month. This can be claimed up to a month before starting a job. For families with two children this could be worth up to £13,000 a year.

Help with upfront childcare costs for starting work is available through a non-repayable Flexible Support Fund (FSF) award for eligible UC claimants. The FSF received an additional £150m this financial year to help support UC claimants to move closer to, or in to, work. Help with upfront costs for eligible UC claimants is available through Budgeting Advances

Neil Coyle:

[\[74629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to the public purse of roll-on benefits for people in receipt of (a) income support, (b) jobseeker's allowance and (c) employment and support allowance during the migration of those claimants to universal credit.

Neil Coyle:

[75341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to the public purse of rolling on existing claims of (a) income support, (b) jobseeker's allowance and (c) employment and support allowance during the five week wait to receive universal credit.

Will Quince:

As set out in section 1.11 of the National Audit Office's report 'Universal Credit: getting to first payment', the Department estimates that it will spend £750 million on benefit run-ons from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust Independent Review

Rosie Cooper:

[\[66831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) start date is and (b) panel members are for the independent investigation into Liverpool Community Health.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 July 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Liverpool Community Health Investigation was launched in June 2019 and work has begun. The ~~Inquiry~~ **Investigation** comprises three Stages. Stage 1 **covers** ~~covered~~ the scale of the issues and Stage 2 ~~is was~~ a clinical and structured judgement review alongside Stage 1. ~~Preliminary work~~ **Work** on Stages 1 and 2 was completed in August 2019.

Stage 3 will investigate individual serious patient safety incidents identified from the previous two stages to establish the nature and scale of deaths and patient harm at the Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust from 2010 to 2014.

The Investigation has identified a number of expert advisors to assist the Chairman and details will be confirmed when the Terms of Reference ~~covering Stage 3~~ are published in Parliament.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Consultation on 2025 UK Border Strategy

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove): [\[HCWS418\]](#)

When the Transition Period with the European Union concludes at the end of this year, we will leave the Single Market and Customs Union. As we embark on a new chapter for this country, we have the opportunity to design a future border that delivers maximum benefit to the UK.

Today, the UK Government will publish a public consultation to invite stakeholders to share ideas and evidence to help develop a 2025 UK Border Strategy that will deliver the world's most effective border by 2025. A border that is more streamlined and user-centric, that helps businesses take advantage of new trading relationships around the world, whilst maintaining high-levels of security to protect the public, the environment and public health.

Our goal is to publish a 2025 UK Border Strategy by the end of the year setting out a clear vision and roadmap that the Government and border industry, working together, can deliver.

This announcement follows the launch of the public information campaign, The UK's new start: let's get going, and the publication of the Border Operating Model on Monday 13 July that set out how businesses and industry can prepare for the end of the Transition Period.

■ Public Bodies 2019 and Public Appointments Data Report 2019

Parliamentary Secretary (Cabinet Office) (Julia Lopez): [\[HCWS425\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Lord Agnew of Oulton) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am pleased to announce the publication of Public Bodies 2019 and the Public Appointments Data Report 2019 and will today be placing copies in the library of both Houses.

Public bodies play a vital role in the delivery of public services for all our citizens, covering wide-ranging functions. Well-governed, effective and efficient public bodies enable the government to deliver its priorities.

Public Bodies 2019 is an annual directory that provides a single transparent source of top-level financial and non-financial data on all executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies and non-ministerial departments across government.

The public appointments data report provides a breakdown of the diversity of public appointees who were in roles covered by the Governance Code on public appointments

on 31 March 2019 and those appointed to such roles between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. The latter data is a subset of the information published in the Commissioner for Public Appointments' annual report.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Supporting the deployment of 5G and extending mobile coverage – Planning Update

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital Infrastructure (Matt Warman): [\[HCWS422\]](#)

Widespread, reliable mobile connectivity is essential for people and businesses. That is why the government has agreed a £1 billion Shared Rural Network deal with the UK's mobile network operators to extend 4G mobile geographical coverage to 95% of the UK by 2025. The Government is also investing £200 million in a programme of 5G testbeds and trials to encourage investment in 5G so that communities and businesses can benefit from this new technology.

It is essential that the planning system continues to support the delivery of the mobile infrastructure that we need. On 27 August 2019, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a joint consultation on in-principle proposed reforms to permitted development rights in England. The consultation ran for 10 weeks, closing on 4 November 2019.

Today I am pleased to inform members that we have published the Government's response to this [consultation](#).

We are satisfied that the proposed reforms are necessary to support the Government's ambitions for the deployment of 5G and extending mobile coverage, particularly in rural areas, where mobile coverage tends to lag behind more urban areas. In taking forward these proposals, we will ensure that the appropriate environmental protections and other safeguards are in place to mitigate the impact of new mobile infrastructure.

Therefore, subject to a technical consultation on the detail of the proposals, including the appropriate environmental protections and other safeguards, we are intending to take forward the proposals consulted on to:

- Enable the deployment of radio equipment housing, such as equipment cabinets, on land without requiring prior approval, up to specified limits and excluding on sites of special scientific interest, to support 5G deployment;
- Strengthen existing masts up to specified limits to enable sites to be upgraded for 5G and for mast sharing without prior approval;
- Enable the deployment of building-based masts nearer to highways to support deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage, subject to prior approval and specified limits; and,

- Enable higher new masts to deliver better mobile coverage, and mast sharing, subject to prior approval and specified limits.

These changes will benefit communities and businesses and provide greater regulatory certainty to incentivise investment in mobile infrastructure.

The mobile industry has a vital role to play in delivering these improvements and in bringing forward the infrastructure required, and we expect them to commit to further measures and assurances to ensure that the impact of new mobile deployment is minimised.

Making these changes would require amendments to existing planning legislation. Prior to any future legislative changes, we will undertake the technical consultation.

We will now develop the technical consultation, working with mobile industry representatives, relevant regulators including Ofcom, representatives of local planning authorities and those representing protected areas, to ensure that the appropriate environmental protections and other safeguards are in place to mitigate the impact of new mobile infrastructure. This includes strengthening the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England, which provides guidance to mobile network operators and local planning authorities.

As planning law is a devolved matter, any future legislative changes will apply to England only, but we will continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations to ensure that the planning regime continues to support the deployment of mobile infrastructure.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ London Croughton Annex

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab):
[\[HCWS419\]](#)

I informed the House on 20 December that I had instructed my officials to discuss with the United States a revision of the immunity arrangements at the Croughton Annex for US personnel and their families, following the road collision of 27 August 2019 in which Harry Dunn was killed. As I set out previously to the House, the status of US staff under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) at the Croughton Annex is the subject of special arrangements between the UK and US governments, captured in exchanges of notes dating back to 1995. Those arrangements contained a waiver of immunity from criminal jurisdiction for US staff outside the course of their duties, but no such waiver for their family members.

I am glad to inform the House today that we have concluded those discussions with the US and agreed a revision of the arrangements. I welcome the constructive engagement of our US allies in these discussions.

First and foremost, the US waiver of immunity from criminal jurisdiction is now expressly extended to the family members of US staff at the Croughton Annex, thus ending the

anomaly in the previous arrangements and permitting the criminal prosecution of the family members of those staff, should these tragic circumstances ever arise again.

Second, the waiver from criminal jurisdiction now extends also to all Embassy staff serving at the Croughton Annex in respect of acts outside their official duties, not just Administrative and Technical staff.

Third, the revised arrangements contain a further and new waiver in respect of inviolability. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations not only provides for immunity from jurisdiction, but also provides for the separate privilege of inviolability, including complete protection from arrest and detention. The earlier Croughton arrangements contained no waiver of inviolability. This is addressed in the revised arrangements.

I am therefore pleased to report to the House that we have secured the agreement of the US so that the Croughton arrangements could not in future be used in the same way as in the tragic case of Harry Dunn. These changes took effect by way of an exchange of notes on 20 July.

Separately, we have continued to press the US on the need to improve road safety at RAF Croughton. I welcome the steps taken by the US base commander to extend mandatory requirements for driving training and instruction for all US staff on the base, and the improvement of road signage within the base and vehicles of staff to remind them to drive on the left.

I welcome the action of local authorities to add added extra signage outside the base to remind drivers to drive on the left.

I am pleased to inform the House that my RHF the Secretary of State for Transport has launched a safety review of roads around the 10 US Visiting Forces (USVF) bases in England. This entails working with the Ministry of Defence, Highways England and respective police and local authorities – in the case of Croughton, the Northamptonshire Police and South Northamptonshire Council.

We have the deepest sympathy for Harry Dunn's family. No family should have to experience what they have gone through and I recognise that these changes will not bring Harry back. However, I hope that the knowledge that the Croughton arrangements have been revised and that a family in their position would now see justice done brings some small measure of comfort.

HOME OFFICE

■ Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa and Suspension of Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[\[HCWS421\]](#)

The decision of the Chinese Government to impose its national security legislation on Hong Kong is a matter of deep regret to this Government. This legislation and its strict

implementation constitutes a clear breach of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, undermining the “one country, two systems” framework. It cannot be ignored.

I set out here the Government’s plans for a new Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) Visa and for the suspension of our Extradition Treaty with Hong Kong.

Hong Kong BN(O) Visa

Before the handover of the UK’s responsibilities for Hong Kong, we created the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) nationality status which was opened to people in Hong Kong, through a registration process, to those who had British Dependent Territories citizenship. This status recognised the special and enduring ties the UK has with those people as a result of our role in Hong Kong before 1997. Now that China through its actions has changed the circumstances that BN(O) citizens find themselves in, it is right that we should change the entitlements which are attached to BN(O) status. I have decided to significantly improve those entitlements, to reassure BN(O) citizens that they have options to live in the UK if they decide that is an appropriate choice for them.

Today I am laying before the House a command paper (CP 280) providing further detail on a new bespoke Hong Kong BN(O) Visa, covering eligibility, conditions and entitlements, the application process, timing, the position for BN(O) citizens in the UK, and arrangements for BN(O) citizens arriving at the border.

BN(O) citizens in Hong Kong are in a unique position, which is why I have designed a policy which is specific to them in the wider immigration system. It will not set a precedent. It is a proportionate response to the situation which has arisen. The UK is entitled to decide on the rights attaching to BN(O) status which it has previously conferred and that is what I am doing with these changes.

My offer to BN(O) citizens is therefore a very generous one. There will be no skills tests or minimum income requirements, economic needs tests or caps on numbers. I am giving BN(O) citizens the opportunity to acquire full British citizenship. They do not need to have a job before coming to the UK - they can look for work once here. They may bring their immediate dependants, including non-BN(O) citizens.

At the same time, it is not an unconditional offer. BN(O) citizens will need to support themselves independently while living in the UK; they must meet strict criminality checks and stay of good character; they will need to pay visa fees, the Immigration Health Surcharge and, if they subsequently apply for citizenship after they become settled, the fee and meet the criteria. These are reasonable things to ask of BN(O) citizens, and BN(O) citizens will need to ask themselves whether coming to the UK to put down roots here is the right choice for them. It is a choice I am making available and I welcome warmly all those who decide to take it.

We are planning to open the Hong Kong BN(O) Visa for applications from January 2021. BN(O) citizens do not need to hold a BN(O) passport in order to apply for the visa – so there is no need to apply for or renew a BN(O) passport specifically for this purpose. All BN(O) citizens will need a visa to be able to settle in the UK.

We understand there will be cases where the children of BN(O) citizens will not normally be eligible because they were born after 1997 (so are not BN(O) citizens) and are over 18 so they would not normally be considered as a dependant in the UK's immigration system. Therefore, in compelling and compassionate circumstances, and where applications are made as a family unit, we will use discretion to grant a visa to the children of BN(O) citizens who fall into this category and who are still dependent on the BN(O) citizen.

If the above doesn't apply then the existing youth mobility scheme is open to people in Hong Kong aged between 18-30, with 1000 places currently available each year. Individuals from Hong Kong will also be able to apply to come to the UK under the terms of the UK's new Points Based System, which will enable individuals to come to the UK in a wider range of professions and at a lower general salary threshold than in the past.

The Home Office looks forward to receiving applications for this visa.

Extradition

The imposition of new National Security Legislation has significantly changed the assumptions underpinning the 1998 Agreement for the Surrender of Fugitive Offenders, our extradition treaty with Hong Kong. The Government remains especially concerned about Articles 55 to 59 of the law, which could give mainland authorities the ability to assume jurisdiction over certain cases and try those cases in Chinese courts.

The National Security Law provides no legal or judicial safeguards in such cases. The decision can be made by the mainland authorities with no reference to the Hong Kong Government. Other than access to a lawyer there are no legal or judicial safeguards in such cases and mainland systems of investigation, trial and punishment, about which the international community has long standing concerns, would apply. If China applies that legislation extraterritorially, it will pose a risk not only to Hong Kong residents who travel abroad, but potentially to British and other Nationals travelling into Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Department of Justice has therefore been notified of our intention to suspend the extradition treaty, immediately and indefinitely, until the UK is sufficiently assured that the new National Security Agency established by China in Hong Kong will not be able to initiate extradition requests to the UK, that extradition requests will not be sent in relation to newly created offences under the National Security Law; and that people extradited from the UK could never be transferred from Hong Kong to mainland China without the UK's explicit consent.

The suspension will protect those resident in the UK, including those who may soon be here by virtue of the new immigration route, from unwarranted pursuit through the provisions of the Extradition Treaty.

■ **Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) Annual Report and Accounts 2019 – 2020**

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse):
[\[HCWS423\]](#)

I am today, along with my Right Honourable Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, (Jesse Norman), publishing the 2019-20 annual report and accounts for the Independent Office for Police Conduct [HC 511]. This will be laid before the House and published on www.gov.uk. The report will also be available in the Vote Office.

■ **Launching a review of the Police and Crime Commissioner model**

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service (Kit Malthouse):
[\[HCWS416\]](#)

I wish to set out to the House details of a review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners.

The Government's manifesto committed to strengthening the accountability of PCCs and expanding their role. Police and Crime Commissioners were introduced in 2012 to give the public a direct say over policing in their area. Since coming into post, they have brought real local accountability to policing and are working to give local communities a stronger voice.

After eight years it is right that we step back and consider how we can continue to evolve the PCC model. It is important that PCCs are strong, visible leaders in the fight against crime and have the legitimacy and tools to hold their police forces to account effectively.

To deliver this commitment, I am today announcing a two-part internal review into the role of PCCs.

Part one will commence in late July and report to the Home Secretary and myself by October 2020. It will be focussed on changes required to strengthen the model which, where possible, can be delivered ahead of the 2021 PCC elections. In particular, it will: consider how to strengthen the accountability, resilience, legitimacy and scrutiny mechanisms of the existing model to drive up standards; identify and share best practice across the sector; and examine the effectiveness of the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables and the checks and balances currently in place.

We will also use part one of the review to help us map out our longer-term ambition for the expansion of the PCC role. In relation to fire, the Government is clear that further reform of fire and rescue services is required in order to respond to the recommendations from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and to build on the findings from Sir Tom Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report, both of which demonstrate the clear challenges and improvements required in professionalism, people and governance. The review will consider further options and opportunities to strengthen fire governance and accountability, drawing on the lessons from the first cycle of fire governance transfers to PCCs.

The review will also be fully aligned with the Government's commitment to expand the benefits of devolution across England through the Local Recovery and Devolution White Paper. Mayors of Combined Authorities should be powerful local figures with the ability to drive public safety, as well as economic growth and local recovery. We plan to develop the role of PCCs with that longer-term trajectory in mind, building on the models in London and Greater Manchester.

I would like to be clear that neither Part one or Part two of the review will consider a wholly new governance model for policing or examine the 43 police force model.

An Advisory Group will support part one of the review, comprising senior external stakeholders with expertise in the policing and fire sectors. It will also be important that the public's views on those who represent them in policing are heard and the review team will seek to engage a sample of citizens and local and national victims' groups as appropriate.

Part two of the review will commence after the 2021 elections and will allow us to consider further ways to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs, including the role PCCs play in tackling re-offending to help reduce crime. It will focus on longer-term reforms and the potential for wider efficiencies to be made within the system with a view to implementation ahead of the 2024 elections.

I will place a copy of the Terms of Reference for part one of the review in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ **UK Anti-Corruption Strategy – Year 2 Update**

The Minister of State for Security (James Brokenshire):

[\[HCWS420\]](#)

Today, I am publishing the second annual Update on the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022. The government is committed to providing an annual written update to parliament on progress.

The UK Anti-Corruption Strategy provides a framework to guide Government anti-corruption policies and actions. This update sets out the significant progress that the UK has made on implementing many of the commitments of the Anti-Corruption Strategy during 2019, whilst recognising that a more challenging global environment has led to some areas of more limited progress. Corruption undermines our national security and prosperity. It corrodes trust in our institutions and threatens our borders. Without strong anti-corruption measures it is harder for British businesses to compete in the new and emerging markets we are starting to foster.

The Year 2 Update demonstrates that the Government is determined to deliver on its commitment to combat corruption in order to keep our citizens safe, to help secure a more prosperous society and to strengthen trust in our domestic and international institutions. The unprecedented challenge posed by COVID-19 only heightens the relevance and urgency of this activity. The Government will continue to combat corruption and to promote integrity and transparency at home and overseas, working with international allies and through multilateral institutions to address existing and emerging threats, raise standards and promote collective action.

I have written to the Devolved Administrations as the Update is of direct interest to them.

A copy of the Year 2 Update report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and also published on GOV.UK.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme 2020

Minister of State for Housing (Christopher Pincher): [\[HCWS424\]](#)

Today, I am laying before Parliament a Departmental Minute setting out the details of a contingent liability that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government intends to incur under the Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Act 2012. The contingent liability will be created by a new £3bn Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme.

The new Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme – announced at Spring Statement 2019 – will be delivered by a delivery partner on behalf of the Ministry under the oversight of Homes England. The delivery partner is being appointed through a fair, open and competitive procurement process, and we have appointed a preferred bidder with whom we will agree the detailed operational arrangements. We plan on awarding the contract over the coming weeks and for the scheme to be open for business by the end of the year. In delivering the scheme, the delivery partner will raise capital from bond market investors and on-lend the proceeds to Registered Providers of affordable housing in England. The Ministry will guarantee both the proceeds to bond investors and payments by borrowers to the issuing entity.

Through the scheme the Government will boost investment in providers of affordable housing and support the delivery of a significant number of new affordable homes for those whose housing needs are not currently met by the market.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Machinery of Government

Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): [\[HCWS417\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

Government use of data

Responsibility for government use of data has transferred from the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) to the Cabinet Office. DCMS will retain responsibility for data policy for the economy and society. This change will help ensure that government data is used most effectively to drive policy making and service delivery. The change is effective immediately.