



Daily Report

Tuesday, 1 September 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 1 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 01 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Crown Prosecution Service: Coronavirus

Ellie Reeves:

[\[76847\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of CPS staff have had to self-isolate due to covid-19 and what (a) role and (b) staffing grade of those staff is.

Michael Ellis:

From records held on the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Oracle HR database for the period 1 April 2020 to 10 August 2020, five CPS employees (0.08% of the workforce) have been absent from work, but not ill, because of the need to quarantine or be in self isolation due to COVID-19. Three of those are employed at Executive Officer equivalent grade and held non-prosecutor roles and two at Grade 7 equivalent and held prosecutor roles.

Data Source: CPS Oracle HR 10 August 2020, categorisation in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance

■ Emergency Services: Crimes of Violence

Philip Davies:

[\[78585\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many prosecutions for assaulting an emergency worker have related to assaults against (a) police officers, (b) NHS staff, (c) prison officers, (d) firefighters and (e) other emergency workers since the offence was introduced.

Michael Ellis:

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 is legislation that amended section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 to provide offences relating to common assault or battery committed against an emergency worker while carrying out their duties.

The CPS maintains records of the number of offences in which a CPS prosecution commenced, including offences of assaulting an emergency worker. The data provided in the table detailed below shows the total number of offences in which a prosecution by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) commenced at magistrates' courts under the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 since it came into force on the 13th November 2018. However the CPS does not hold any central record of the details of complainants' occupations.

	2018/19 (Nov 18 - MAR 19)	2019/20
Total offences: Criminal Justice Act 1988 and section 1 of the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 {39}	4,395	23,492

It should be noted that the figures relate to the number of offences and not the number of individual defendants. It may be the case that an individual defendant is charged with more than one offence. No data are held on the final outcome or if the charged offence was the substantive charge at finalisation.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of the number of defendants charged with, or prosecuted for these offences. This information could only be obtained by examining CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Philip Davies:

[\[78588\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what estimate she has made of the proportion of assaults on shop workers that were prosecuted in each of the last three years.

Michael Ellis:

The CPS does not maintain a central record of complainants' occupations, nor of the specific circumstances under which a person has been charged with an offence. This information could only be obtained by an examination of CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Sentencing

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78506\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what recent sentences she has extended through the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

Michael Ellis:

The Court of Appeal has recently increased the sentences upon a reference by the Law Officers in the following cases. In the first, the offender Habte stabbed a lone female who was a stranger to him: his sentence was increased to reflect a finding of dangerousness, to one of five years' detention with a three year licence extension. In a case of manslaughter, the offender Taiwo's sentence was increased to seven years' two months imprisonment, building on another case the Law Officers referred which emphasises the seriousness of "one-punch" attacks, Coyle. Most recently, the sentence of a Manchester man who raped his 15 year old girlfriend when he was 19 was referred to the Court and increased to three years' imprisonment.

■ Sexual Offences: Private Rented Housing**Peter Kyle:** [\[78763\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75406 on Sexual Offences: Private Rented Housing, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the updated January 2019 CPS guidance on sex for rent arrangements and advertisements; and whether that guidance has resulted on prosecutions.

Peter Kyle: [\[78764\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75406 on Sexual Offences: Private Rented Housing, what estimate she has made of the number of prosecutions for Sex for Rent Arrangements and Advertisements under section 52 or 53 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in the last 12 months.

Michael Ellis:

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not maintain a central record of the number of prosecutions for sex for rent arrangements and advertisements under section 52 or 53 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This information could only be obtained by an examination of individual CPS case files, which would incur disproportionate cost. Therefore, the CPS is unable to make an assessment of the effectiveness of updated CPS guidance on prosecutions of sex for rent arrangements and advertisements.

Prosecutors will consider all guidance available to them when applying the Code for Crown Prosecutors to determine whether there is enough evidence to charge and if it is in the public interest to bring a case to court.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Aerospace Industry: East Midlands****Sir Edward Davey:** [\[78484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to (a) Rolls-Royce, (b) Bombardier and (c) other such companies located in the East Midlands; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The advanced manufacturing sector is benefiting from the Government's £330 billion Covid-19 business support package, including those businesses based in the East Midlands.

This support includes the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which has seen 60,409 loans approved worth £13.68 billion; the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which has seen 516 approved loans totalling £3.5 billion; and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has helped 1.2 million employers across the UK to furlough 9.6 million jobs.

■ Aviation: Renewable Energy

Sir Edward Davey:

[78485]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential timescale for all UK internal flights to be able to be powered through (a) electric-battery, (b) hydrogen and (c) other such sustainable sources of energy; and if he will make a statement.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government has a wide range of programmes and challenges that can support research and technology on electric and hydrogen powered flight. These include the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme (£1.95 billion public funding commitment, 2013 to 2026); Future Flight Challenge (£125 million public funding); Faraday Challenge (£246 million); and Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge (£80 million).

Our ATI programme is supporting electric and hydrogen power flight projects, and our publicly funded FlyZero initiative, announced on 20 July, will bring together experts from across the aviation and aerospace sector to tackle issues in designing and building a commercially successful zero-emission aircraft.

■ Batteries: Manufacturing Industries

Kerry McCarthy:

[77537]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the extent of the need to support UK manufacturing capacity for batteries in the context of increasing usage of electric vehicles.

Nadhim Zahawi:

In June 2020, the Advanced Propulsion Centre published a report showing there could be up to £12 billion of market opportunities for battery technology by 2025 for UK players:

<https://www.apcuk.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/06/APC-Passenger-car-electrification-report-online-v1.pdf>.

The Faraday Institution (FI) commissioned a study which showed that by 2040, demand for UK made batteries for the automotive sector will reach 140GWh, or seven 20GWh 'Gigafactories'. The study can be found here at:

https://faraday.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2040_Gigafactory_Report_FINAL.pdf.

The Government has responded to the FI study by launching the Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF). The ATF will provide up to £1 billion to support innovative research and development projects to scale up manufacturing of the latest technology in batteries, motors, electronics and fuel cells. As part of the ATF, the Government is also calling upon industry to put forward investment proposals for the

UK's first Gigafactory. The programme will provide a focus for investment, promote the UK opportunity and support investors with site selection.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Seema Malhotra:

[77630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications have been received for the coronavirus future fund from companies in (a) Hounslow, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) each region of England.

Paul Scully:

On 18th August 2020 the British Business Bank published updated Future Fund data which gives a regional breakdown of 590 companies that have been approved for £588.3 million.

In England, a total of 562 loans have been approved at a value of £573.1m since the scheme was launched 20 May. In the North West, 29 loans have been approved, worth £27.6m, and in Yorkshire and the Humber 19 loans have been approved, worth £14.6m. In the North East 21 loans have been approved at a value of £19.5m, and in the West Midlands 17 loans have been approved at a value of £15.6m. In the East Midlands, 4 loans have been approved at a value of £2.1m and in the East of England 43 loans have been approved at a value of £45m. Furthermore, in the South West 21 loans have been approved at a value of £12.9m and in the South East 76 loans have been approved, worth £89.5m.

This data is only available at regional level and not constituency level; therefore, figures for Hounslow are unavailable. However, in London 332 loans have been approved at a value of £346.3m. In Scotland, 11 loans have been approved at a value of £4.1m and in Wales, 12 loans have been approved, at a value of £6.1m.

■ Consumers: Credit

Stella Creasy:

[76681]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring (a) retailer advertising and (b) influencer marketing on buy now pay later products to include identification of risks to consumers.

Paul Scully:

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) make it a criminal offence for traders to give consumers misleading information. Under the CPRs, traders must provide consumers with the information necessary to make informed decisions and not omit or hide material information which the average consumer needs.

Last year, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) announced new rules to address harms in the Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) market, saving consumers around £40-60 million a year.

The new rules aim to reduce the overall cost of credit for consumers by banning firms from charging backdated interest on repaid sums and requiring firms to provide better information to consumers about BNPL offers, including associated risks. Firms must also give prompts to consumers, to remind them when the offer period is about to end, so that consumers are more likely to repay the credit before they incur interest.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Anneliese Dodds:

[77789]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what advice the Government has provided to employers of clinically extremely vulnerable employees, who have not used the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for a three-week period prior to the 30 June 2020, and who cannot return safely to work from the 1 August 2020, and who cannot work from home either.

Paul Scully:

The Government has published clear guidance for employers to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible for all staff including those vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable workers.

This can be found under section 2, 'Who should go to work', within the guides:
www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Alex Norris:

[77780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the UK deal to purchase 90 million potential covid-19 vaccine doses complements global efforts to co-ordinate vaccine supplies and ensure priority groups in every country are vaccinated first.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK is working closely with international partners to ensure that when a vaccine is available, it will be accessible to everyone who needs it as soon as possible.

The UK has committed alongside other countries to support equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments for example, committing up to £250 million of UK aid to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) for the development of coronavirus vaccines. The UK has already committed £48 million to the COVID-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility (COVAX) Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) which supports low and middle-income countries (LMICs) to access a successful vaccine.

The UK is also working closely with CEPI, GAVI (Vaccine Alliance) and the WHO to shape the emerging proposal for the self-financing arm of COVAX, which can support both domestic access and equitable access to LMICs.

We continue to work with our international partners to ensure that where countries have bilateral deals – including whether we be in the fortunate position where we have excess doses, these could be contributed to the COVAX facility.

Alex Norris:

[\[77781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will ensure that the 90 million doses of potential covid-19 vaccines which the UK has purchased are allocated according to the WHO Equitable Allocation Framework.

Amanda Solloway:

We are actively working with vaccine alliance GAVI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and the World Health Organisation to meet our ambition of access to vaccine for all countries – this includes working alongside other countries to support the development of the COVID-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility (COVAX) facility. The priority of the entire world is securing a vaccine as quickly as possible, and our investment is supporting that effort.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[905246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress his Department has made on finding a safe and effective vaccination against covid-19.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is leading efforts to find and manufacture a vaccine, working with industry and experts, both here in the UK and internationally to ensure we are in the best position possible to support the discovery, manufacture and mass-deployment of a successful vaccine should a candidate prove successful. A number of agreements to procure millions of doses of vaccines have been made, ensuring the greatest possible chance of securing access to a safe and effective vaccine. The UK has now secured access to 6 different candidates, across 4 different vaccines types, including University of Oxford's vaccine being developed with AstraZeneca and agreements with BioNTech/Pfizer alliance, Valneva, Novavax, Janssen and GSK/Sanofi Pasteur.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Ministerial Responsibility

Chi Onwurah:

[\[78668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on how many occasions he has issued a Ministerial direction to his Department in the last 5 years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Since its formation on 14 July 2016, the Department has received 11 Ministerial Directions.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Marion Fellows:

[\[77692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy, what steps she is taking to create safe

work environments for disabled people as they return to work as covid-19 lockdown restrictions ease.

Paul Scully:

The Government has published guidance on safer working for a range of working environments, available on gov.uk. The guidance does not change employers' obligations to make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities.

Nothing in this guidance affects employers' existing responsibilities under health and safety, employment and equalities legislation. Employers therefore need to bear in mind the particular needs of different groups or individuals, and make sure that the steps they take to address the risk of COVID-19 do not unjustifiably impact on some groups compared with others.

The safer workplaces guidance provides suggestions to help employers make their workplaces COVID-19 secure for their employees, visitors and customers. We expect all businesses to approach reopening in a sensible way, taking account of the Government's guidance and discussing with neighbouring businesses and their local authorities where applicable.

The guidance covers England only, but it is drafted in a way that is useful to all employers. The Devolved Administrations were consulted regularly throughout the drafting of this guidance.

Employers should follow all guidance and comply with relevant legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

■ **Energy Supply: Electric Vehicles**

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[78823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the National Grid on its capacity to store and supply electricity to support the planned increase in the number of electric cars.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Officials within BEIS have regular engagement with National Grid to discuss issues around the increased uptake of electric vehicles, most recently in the context of the Office for Low Emission Vehicles' (OLEV) recent consultation on the phase out of internal combustion engine cars and vans.

BEIS officials also engage with National Grid over their production of the annual Future Energy Scenarios (FES), looking ahead to 2050 to show what the future of energy in GB might look like. The latest FES includes projections of increase in annual electricity demand due to a combination of emerging technologies, including electric vehicles, and highlights the key impact of flexibility services associated with electric vehicles in meeting this future required demand.

Foreign Companies: China**Anthony Mangnall:**[\[77808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will review the level of involvement of state-owned Chinese companies in the UK's critical energy infrastructure.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department works very closely with industry and other government departments to maintain a detailed picture of ownership and foreign involvement in critical national infrastructure.

The Department ensures protection of infrastructure and critical services through a broad range of mitigations, including legislative and regulatory powers. Foreign involvement in critical national infrastructure undergoes the highest levels of scrutiny.

Furniture: Fire Resistant Materials**Geraint Davies:**[\[76560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the minutes of the discussions between his Department and the Office for Product Safety and Standards in February 2020 on (a) updating and (b) removing children's products from the scope of the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

Paul Scully:

The Office for Product Safety and Standards is a departmental office within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. We do not publish minutes of internal policy development meetings.

The Government published its response to the Environmental Audit Committee's Twentieth Report of Session 2017–19 on Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Life (EAC) on 16 September 2019. It committed to reviewing the scope of the furniture and fire safety regs including baby and children's products.

Galileo System**Owen Thompson:**[\[76790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government has taken to develop a replacement for Galileo's encrypted service for use by UK military and emergency services from 1 January 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK Space Agency is continuing to develop options for a UK space-based positioning, navigation and timing system (PNT). Galileo's secure service is still under development and is only expected to be operational in the mid to late 2020s. Beyond January 1st 2021, the UK public and businesses will still have access to open services provided by various international GNSS systems such as GPS and Galileo, and the UK armed forces will still retain access to the US GPS secure service.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Robert Halfon:

[\[78623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing retrospective claims for the green homes grant scheme to support businesses that will have work delayed until the scheme is introduced.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Green Homes Grant scheme will be available from the 30th September. The scheme has been designed to encourage homeowners to consider improving the energy efficiency of their homes (something we know lots of households put at the bottom of their list of priorities because of the cost), and focus on those measures which give greatest thermal benefits and carbon reductions, but which consumers are typically less likely to install on their own. Therefore, retrospective claims will not be eligible.

■ New Businesses: Young People

Seema Malhotra:

[\[77631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what (a) funding from the public purse and (b) support the Government is providing for young entrepreneurs in (i) Feltham and Heston constituency and (ii) the UK.

Paul Scully:

The Start Up Loans company, part of the Government-backed British Business Bank, provides loans to start and grow new businesses. Since the programme's launch in 2012, 2,550 loans have been made in the London region worth £17,460,947 to entrepreneurs aged 18-24. In the same period, 4,935 loans have been made worth £40,522,593 in the London region to individuals aged 24-30. This information is not held by constituency.

Business Support Helpline is a national service that provides information to help entrepreneurs of all ages to start up. In the past 12 months the Helpline supported 534 entrepreneurs under the age of 25 and in London Economic Action Partnership area covering Feltham and Heston.

Nationally, as part of the Plan for Jobs, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 8 July 2020, businesses will be given £2,000 for each new apprentice hired under the age of 25. This will be in addition to the £1,000 payment the Government currently provides for new 16-18-year-old apprentices and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. £111 million was also announced to triple the scale of traineeships in the UK.

■ OneWeb**Chi Onwurah:** [\[76691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's acquisition of an equity share in OneWeb, who will develop the go-to-market strategy for each region that OneWeb operates in; and what assessment he has made of the extent that OneWeb is dependent on (a) broadband and (b) GPS services for revenues.

Amanda Solloway:

As a shareholder in OneWeb, we will have strong representation on the Board and be fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the business. The current generation of OneWeb satellites deliver satellite communications services and, we are currently assessing the wider use of their capabilities. Dedicated work is ongoing across Government to determine the UK's positioning, navigation and timing requirements and assess options for meeting them.

Chi Onwurah: [\[76692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his plans are for the (a) governance arrangements and (b) board representation for the Government's equity share in OneWeb.

Amanda Solloway:

As a shareholder in OneWeb, we will have strong representation on the Board and be fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the business. We will also have a special share that will allow the UK government to have a final say over any future sale of the company, and over future access to OneWeb technology by other countries on national security grounds.

■ Oneweb: Investment**Owen Thompson:** [\[76792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2020 to Question 72998, what the evidential basis is for the Government to expect revenue streams from aerospace, maritime, government and military and enterprise/business broadband from 2022.

Amanda Solloway:

This is game-changing technology that could provide broadband to vast areas currently without connectivity, for example over entire oceans. This coverage in connectivity could provide valuable commercial services to sectors such as maritime and aviation, providing new ways to connect ships and planes. The current negotiations are commercially sensitive, so it would not be appropriate to comment further.

■ Overseas Aid: Developing Countries

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[76834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much Official Development Assistance his Department has disbursed in (a) Least Developed, (b) Other Low Income, (c) Lower Middle Income and (d) Upper Middle Income countries in each of the last five years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was formed in July 2016. The data provided here shows the combined BEIS Official Development Assistance (ODA) cash spend position for both Climate ODA and R&D ODA, on a calendar year basis.

COUNTRY TYPE	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
a) LDCs	21,754,998	47,625,316	50,249,793	55,334,226	174,964,333
b) Other LICs	1,516,915	9,053,023	870,122	1,690,737	13,130,797
c) LMICs	30,574,472	47,217,944	76,697,348	93,034,109	247,523,872
d) UMICs	66,782,481	185,059,596	164,686,185	142,735,916	559,264,178
Other	601,816,475	476,361,051	557,209,148	667,036,187	2,302,422,861
TOTAL	722,445,342	765,316,930	849,712,595	959,831,174	3,297,306,042

In the above table, "Other" covers spend that is categorised as regional / global / multi-country or spend that is unable to be categorised by country. Some of this "Other" spend would likely have been disbursed to the country categories listed in a) – d), but it is not possible to quantify the amount.

■ Postgraduate Education: Government Assistance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[78658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support is available for early career researchers who are unable to finish their research projects before the extension for UKRI-funded PhD students expires.

Amanda Solloway:

On 9 April, it was announced that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will offer a costed extension of up to six months for UKRI PhD students due to complete by 31 March 2021 whose study has been impacted by the pandemic. This includes 6,334 of 22,065 current UKRI-funded doctoral students. Those UKRI-funded students not in their final year may be granted extensions on a case by case basis.

On 24 April, UKRI issued detailed guidance to universities on how the policy should be implemented. UKRI has outlined that universities must put in place processes that

are based upon the principles of ensuring all UKRI doctoral students are supported to complete their projects and that they should be treated fairly, generously and sympathetically given the disruptions caused to research programmes and individual's personal circumstances. Guidance is available here

<https://www.ukri.org/files/news/implementation-guidance-training-grant-holders/>

UK Research and Innovation is engaging with the wider sector about the implementation of the extension and to identify and understand future impact, including the numbers of students it funds that are affected. The extension will be reviewed in four months' time to ensure that any further impacts to doctoral training are taken into account.

Chi Onwurah:

[78659]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support the Government makes available to help post-doctoral researchers who have left research return to the profession.

Amanda Solloway:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 27 July 2020 to Question [76033](#).

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers:

[76630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of easing covid-19 lockdown restrictions to allow pubs to return to pre-lockdown levels of capacity.

Paul Scully:

Opening up more of Britain in a COVID-Secure way is only possible if everyone continues to stay alert to the risks of Coronavirus by keeping 2m apart where possible (or 1m with precautions if not), washing their hands regularly, following the rules when they are visiting businesses and, crucially, getting a test immediately if they develop symptoms and self-isolating if they are instructed to by NHS Test and Trace.

Government has set out COVID-Secure guidance to help businesses – like pubs – take the measures that will protect themselves and their customers.

We are taking a phased approach to further reopening of sectors in the economy, in line with prevailing public health conditions. Our approach is guided by the scientific and medical advice, and every step is weighed against the evidence.

■ Public Houses: Hospitality Industry

Theresa Villiers:

[76628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will include the Campaign for Pubs in his Department's discussions with the hospitality sector.

Paul Scully:

The Government has had regular engagement with a wide range of stakeholders from across the hospitality industry, including the pub sector. The Department will continue to engage with a variety of representatives from the sector to discuss how to support pubs through this challenging period.

■ Redundancy Pay: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Andrew Gwynne:**[\[76632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on employers using money from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to make redundancy payments.

Paul Scully:

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grants cannot be used to cover redundancy payments. The Government wants to ensure that employees do not lose out on their employment rights because they have been furloughed. New legislation which commenced on 31 July will ensure that pay received in relation to statutory redundancy pay, statutory notice pay, unfair dismissal compensation and pay for short-time working are based on an employee's normal pay, rather than their furlough pay (potentially 80% of their normal wage).

■ Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund**Fleur Anderson:**[\[76902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) lettings agents and (b) other independent businesses, required by covid-19 guidance to restrict activity, that are in shared access premises qualify for the Retail and Hospitality grant if they pay business rates and meet the relevant thresholds.

Paul Scully:

Businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) on 11 March with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the following cash grants per property via the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund:

- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000 will receive a grant of £10,000.
- Eligible businesses in these sectors with a property that has a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a grant of £25,000.

Only businesses with their own assessment for business rates and eligible for the Expanded Retail Discount, with a rateable value below £51,000, will be eligible for the grant. Businesses which are not ratepayers are not eligible.

We understand for some shared space/service offices, individual users do have their own rating assessment and may be eligible. In these cases we encourage landlords to support local government in ensuring the grant reaches eligible ratepayers.

In addition, on 1 May, the Government announced that up to £617 million has been made available to local authorities in England to allow them to provide discretionary grants. The Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs that are not liable for business rates or rates reliefs.

■ Small Businesses: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[78664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support the research priorities of SMEs.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government has committed to increasing UK investment in science, innovation and technology to 2.4% of GDP by 2027. In order to achieve this target, the Government has set out plans for public investment in R&D to reach £22 billion by 2024/25, a record increase in spending.

We are implementing the ambitious R&D Roadmap, to ensure the UK is the best place in the world for scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs to live and work, while helping to power up the UK's economic and social recovery and level up the UK.

Businesses are the foundation of our economy and ensuring that they can continue to develop the new products and services our society will need is crucial. We will provide a comprehensive environment that can build on UK strengths. This will allow SMEs and industry to grow and flourish, attract international R&D investment and talent to the UK.

For innovative SMEs, a £750 million package of support including targeted grants and loans is available, delivered by Innovate UK.

We will also continue to foster collaborations between business and R&D infrastructures, including through the network of Catapult Centres which were established to commercialise new and emerging technologies in areas where there are large global market opportunities. Since their inception, catapults have supported nearly 6,000 SMEs. Over the next five years our investment will allow the Catapult network to continue to help thousands of businesses across the UK undertake cutting-edge R&D.

■ Universities: China

Anthony Browne:

[R] [78893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding each university in the UK has received from (a) the Chinese Government, (b) other Chinese state authorities and (c) companies based in China.

Amanda Solloway:

Universities in the UK are independent organisations. The Government does not collect data of this sort.

Higher education providers in the UK are required to submit certain categories of data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This is published annually at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/finances>. This includes their overall income from a variety of sources and for a range of different activities, including teaching, research and commercial. This includes research grant and contract income from business. However, HESA data does not indicate the individual businesses concerned.

Cabinet Office: Training**Neil O'Brien:**[\[77798\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff in his Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

Julia Lopez:

The data available indicates that over the last 5 years up to 22 July 2020, 4,615 Cabinet Office staff completed Civil Service unconscious bias e-Learning training.

Census: Sikhs**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[76830\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Sikh community engagement roles are being advertised for the 2021 Census.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[76831\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Punjabi speaking community engagement roles are being advertised for the 2021 Census.

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 [PQ76830_76831 (1).pdf]

Civil Servants: Coronavirus**Jon Trickett:**[\[77511\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with trade union representatives on adherence to covid-19

guidance for civil servants; and what steps civil servants can take to raise concerns about workplace safety in relation to covid-19.

Julia Lopez:

Details of ministerial meetings with external organisations and individuals are published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The Government is engaging with civil service trade unions on Covid-19 related matters. Civil servants are able to raise any concerns with line managers, in line with existing departmental practice and procedures.

■ **Democracy**

Owen Thompson: [78735]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on the Defending Democracy programme announced on 22 July 2019; and what plans he has to publish a report on that programme.

Owen Thompson: [78736]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 22 July 2019, Cabinet Office update, HCWS1772, what consultation the Government has undertaken on electoral integrity as part of the Defending Democracy programme; and which stakeholders that programme has engaged with.

Owen Thompson: [78737]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to respond to the final report from the Law Commission and Scottish Law Commission on Electoral Law, published on 17 March 2020.

Chloe Smith:

The Government takes the integrity and security of our democratic processes very seriously and has welcomed the Law Commissions' *Electoral Law* report.

As we have previously set out, Defending Democracy brings together work and expertise in this space and to ensure a joined-up cross-Government approach. This is to safeguard against future risks, strengthen our resilience and ensure that the regulatory framework is as effective as possible.

The Government regularly engages with a range of stakeholders as part of this work, including regulators, civil society organisations and others.

Publications and announcements will be made in the usual way.

■ **Marriage: Coronavirus**

Robert Halfon: [76667]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if his Department will review the limit of 30 people attending wedding ceremonies as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Robert Halfon:

[76668]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his timescale is for further updating the policy on restrictions on the number of guests at wedding ceremonies as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government is working closely with stakeholders in the wedding industry, the Places of Worship Taskforce, and the National Panel for Registration to keep our COVID-19 secure marriages and civil partnerships policies and guidance under review.

From 15 August 2020 receptions and other celebrations for weddings and civil partnerships can take place in a COVID-19 secure venue, however, this does not apply in areas under local restrictions. Capacity at wedding or civil partnership ceremonies (including the couple, guests, and third-party suppliers, but not venue staff or third-party catering staff) should be no more than 30 and safely accommodated with social distancing in a COVID-19 secure venue. We will reassess guidance in relation to larger wedding receptions in line with the development of the scientific advice. Further guidance on wedding and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions can be found [here](#).

■ Peers: Donors

Catherine West:

[77733]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to bring forward proposals to increase the transparency of financial donations to Members of the House of Lords.

Chloe Smith:

The Register of Lords' interests can be accessed on the parliamentary website at the following address:

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/house-of-lords-commissioner-for-standards/register-of-lords-interests/>

How donations to Members of the House of Lords are regulated and what interest needs to be disclosed in the Register of Interests is a matter for the House of Lords.

■ UK Trade with EU

Helen Hayes:

[76800]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his timetable is for introduction of the Smart Freight Service before the end of the transition period.

Helen Hayes:

[76801]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to The Border with the European Union: Importing and Exporting Goods,

published on 13 July 2020, what his timescale is for the consultation on the use of the Smart Freight Service in Kent this summer.

Helen Hayes:

[\[78765\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to carry out further testing of Operation Brock following the (a) announcement to remove the Operation Brock barrier of 10 January 2020 and (b) potential use of the Smart Freight System outlined on page 134 of his Department's document entitled, Border Operating Model, published on 13 July 2020.

Penny Mordaunt:

A consultation on the proposed legislative amendments on enforcing Operation Brock, including regarding the use of Smart Freight, ran from 3 August 2020 to 23 August 2020. A summary of the responses will be published within three months of the consultation closing. The Government has invited businesses to participate in discussions on design and user testing of the Smart Freight IT service. Further announcements will be made in due course.

DEFENCE

■ Aircraft Carriers: Far East

Jim Shannon:

[\[77622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the deployment of an aircraft carrier to the Far East is planned to include other ships to support that carrier.

James Heappey:

The size and composition of a UK Carrier Strike Group will be set by the deployment requirements as determined during operational planning. For operational security reasons, it is our policy to not comment on specific capabilities as this would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Carla Lockhart:

[\[77855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of providing free meals to armed forces personnel who have been mobilised during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

When Armed Forces personnel are mobilised or deployed away from their permanent duty station, it is normal practice that they are provided with access to meals, either directly or via an allowance which permits them to claim back reasonable expenses on food that they have purchased themselves. This applies to Service Personnel deployed in support of the COVID-19 response.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[78846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) the armed forces recruitment process and (b) the proportion of recruits that become serving personnel in the armed forces.

James Heappey:

In response to Covid-19, the Armed Forces have taken steps to protect recruits, personnel and the wider public, which has disrupted the normal recruitment and training pipeline. The extent of this disruption and thus the time required to resume normal activity, will vary between Services and specific cadres. The Armed Forces are currently re-establishing recruitment and training pipelines, which will allow us to assess how quickly recovery can be completed

It is too early to assess the impact of Covid-19 on future Armed Forces recruitment. Traditionally, when employment opportunities in the wider economy become more scarce, Armed Forces recruitment has improved, though we are mindful not to rely on this phenomenon and are actively working to improve our 'offer' to bolster both recruitment and retention.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[78847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applicants withdrew from the (a) Army, (b) Navy and (c) RAF recruitment process in (i) January, (ii) February, (iii) March, (iv) April and (v) June 2020.

James Heappey:

The number of applicants who withdrew from the recruitment process between January and June 2020 for the Army, Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines) and Royal Air Force is shown in the tables below.

The figures provided are for applicants who had applied to join the Regulars.

ARMY	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Officers	610	610	560	300	280	310
Other Ranks	5,380	4,820	4,200	3,970	3,740	3,920
NAVAL SERVICE	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Officers	420	420	660	330	340	450
Rating/Other Ranks	1,570	1,280	3,510	1,000	1,480	1,340

ROYAL AIR FORCE	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Officers	480	530	450	350	500	680
Other Ranks	950	840	670	660	760	1,310

Notes:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 or the nearest multiple of 20 in accordance with rounding protocol.

All figures are single Service estimates and are not official statistics produced by Defence Statistics.

■ Armed Forces: Counter-terrorism

Gill Furniss:[\[78790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries the UK armed forces are deployed on counter-terrorism operations for which their rules of engagement permit them to use lethal force.

James Heappey:

UK Armed Forces are currently operating in support of counterterrorism operations in four countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Mali). For operational and personnel security reasons we do not comment on specific operational rules of engagement in each theatre. More broadly, UK Armed Forces have an inherent right of self-defence wherever they may be deployed. This permits them to use force, up to and including lethal force, if there is an imminent threat and provided that it is proportionate to the threat faced.

■ Armed Forces: Recruitment

Stephen Morgan:[\[78848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average wait time is for people who pass the (a) Army, (b) Navy and (c) RAF recruitment process to receive a job offer.

James Heappey:

Each Service collates this information in different ways and so the figures are not comparable.

Naval Service (Royal Navy and Royal Marines)

During Recruiting Year (RY) 2019-20, the average (mean) time between a recruiter bidding for a candidate to get an entry date and the allocation of an entry date was 22 days as a total average for Officers and Ratings/Other Ranks.

Army

The average (median) time between the successful completion of an assessment centre and being allocated a training start date during the 2019-20 RY, 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020) for Other Ranks was 51 days. This is not collated for Officers.

Royal Air Force (RAF)

During Financial Year 2019-20, the average (median) wait time for Officer and Other Ranks candidates who completed the RAF recruiting process to receive a job offer was between two and three working days.

■ **Iraq: Detainees**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[76843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people have received payments from his Department or any other Government department as a result of alleging unlawful detention or maltreatment in UK custody since the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and how much in such payments the Government has so disbursed.

James Heappey:

Details of 330 of the 1,000 civil claims where an agreement with the claimant in terms of damages to be paid as a result of alleging unlawful detention or maltreatment in UK custody since the 2003 invasion of Iraq are already in the public domain following responses provided to FOI requests received, and the High Court judgment of December 2017 relating to the trials of the four lead claims in the Iraqi Civilian Litigation (ICL).

Discussions continue between the claimants' solicitors and Departmental officials with regard to the resolution of the remaining claims in the ICL

The terms of these discussions and any outcomes remain the subject of a confidentiality agreement and we are therefore unable to provide a detailed and complete response to this question at this time.

We are unable to comment as to whether any people might have received payments from any other Government Department as a result of alleging unlawful detention or maltreatment in UK custody since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

■ **Navy: Pay**

Anthony Mangnall:

[77816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward the date of the next Submariner remuneration, which is next planned to be undertaken in 2024, to help improve the retention of Submarine Watch Leaders.

Johnny Mercer:

The Royal Navy assesses that there is no merit in bringing forward the date of the next Submariner remuneration review.

■ Porton Down: Ministerial Policy Advisers**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[78486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Government special advisers have been granted access to Porton Down in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is one of several organisations based at the Porton Down. Each organisation manages and records its visitors separately.

Centrally-held visitor information records for Dstl do not routinely record the role or function of visiting officials and so this information is not available. However, at least two Special Advisers have visited Dstl Porton Down in the past five years, one in 2018 and the other in 2020.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Arts and Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus****Hywel Williams:**[\[76612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his press notice entitled £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions, published on 5 July 2020, how much of the £1.57 billion after the deduction of Barnett funding consequentials will be spent on cultural, arts and heritage institutions in Wales.

Caroline Dinéage:

The £1.57 billion culture recovery package - the biggest ever one-off cash-injection in UK culture - is new money and under the Barnett formula the Welsh Government received £59 million.

It is up to the Welsh Government to decide how this funding is spent but we hope they will use it to support arts, heritage and culture in Wales, as we are doing in England.

■ Broadband: Religious Buildings**Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[77482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what representations he has received from (a) churches and (b) faith groups on the barriers to broadband access for places of worship that do not have a postcode.

Matt Warman:

We understand the importance for broadband access in places of worship to help improve connectivity for local communities, as well as practical benefits for such

premises, including streaming services, security, and accepting contactless donations or administration.

The Government has been in discussion with representatives from the Church of England, in particular, regarding the issue of broadband access where places of worship do not have postcodes, or are otherwise missing from telecom provider databases. In some cases this leads to issues in identifying and providing service to such locations.

Over 31,000 premises are listed in relevant databases accessible to the Government as being used as places of worship. Of these, approximately 86% of premises used for religious purposes in Great Britain can access Superfast broadband speeds or better on fixed networks, compared to the UK average of 95%. Approximately 4% of premises used for religious purposes in Great Britain cannot access 'decent broadband' speeds of 10 Megabit/s on Fixed networks, compared to the UK average of 2%, largely due to their rurality. However, 4G data services are also widely available, and this reduces the number of such listed places of worship with no potential service to less than 0.2% of the total.

We are working with relevant stakeholders, including telecom operators and Ofcom, to ascertain the extent of this problem, and how many religious premises are still facing barriers. Part of this is about ensuring data used by operators is up to date and consistent with the data available to the Government. But it is also about identifying appropriate solutions, including ensuring all broadband technology solutions that are available to places of worship are considered.

■ **Gambling: Interent**

Julie Elliott:

[78669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the level of access among young people to online gambling through video games via the loot box mechanism.

Julie Elliott:

[78670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals on online gambling and young people.

Nigel Huddleston:

Loot boxes do not fall under gambling law where the in-game items acquired are confined for use within the game and cannot be cashed out. However, the government is aware of concerns that loot boxes in video games could encourage gambling-like behaviour. The government committed in its manifesto to tackle issues around loot boxes, and in its response to the report of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on immersive and addictive technologies, has announced that it will be issuing a call for evidence to inform next steps. This call for evidence is expected to launch shortly.

The government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age, and further details will be announced in due course. Operators are required both by law and by licence conditions to prevent underage gambling and the Gambling Commission has strengthened requirements to complete age and identity checks before allowing anyone to deposit money and gamble.

■ ICT: China

Chi Onwurah:

[77603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July to Question 74572, and with reference to the National Cyber Security Centre's guidance entitled, Huawei advice: what you need to know, if he will make an assessment of the risk to (a) national security and (b) individual privacy of the use of (i) consumer devices manufactured by high risk vendors and (ii) Chinese applications and platforms.

Matt Warman:

High Risk Vendor (HRV) is a term applied to vendors in the UK telecoms network whose presence may increase security risks for operators – at the present time only Huawei and ZTE have been assessed as HRVs for this purpose.

Following further changes to the US sanctions on Huawei, announced in August 2020, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) is assessing the impact to owners of Huawei and Honor-branded devices in the UK. The change in sanctions may mean that services used by Huawei devices and software updates may, for some products, cease. Devices which can no longer be supported with updates, or access services and app stores, are at increased risk of becoming compromised by criminals if a security vulnerability is discovered. Owners of these devices are encouraged to follow advice which can be found on the NCSC website: [Huawei advice: what you need to know](#), and organisations where employees use personal Huawei devices to access business data and applications, such as email, instant messaging, and office applications, should refer to the NCSC [guidance on BYOD](#).

The NCSC regularly updates its advice and guidance for individuals, families and businesses on a range of cyber security related topics. DCMS and NCSC have, in partnership, worked to protect consumers and the wider economy from the range of harms that can arise from vulnerable consumer connected devices. A proposal to mandate basic security principles via regulation is currently open for a Call for Views, with the ambition to introduce legislation as soon as parliamentary time becomes available.

■ Telecommunications

Chi Onwurah:

[77608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to his oral contribution of 14 July 2020 on UK Telecommunications, Official Report 1377, where the clear and ambitious diversification strategy has been set out.

Matt Warman:

The Secretary of State has previously set out details of the strategy in his oral statement to the House on 14 July and in the oral evidence he provided to the Science and Technology Committee on 22 July. We will be publishing further information in Autumn, alongside the introduction of the Telecoms Security Bill.

■ Theatres: Coronavirus**Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[77484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government support package for the arts in response to the covid-19 outbreak will provide funding for theatres to put on new productions.

Dame Margaret Hodge:[\[77485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government's package of support for the arts in response to the covid-19 outbreak will support theatres to continue undertaking community outreach and education work.

Dame Margaret Hodge:[\[77486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of whether the Government support package for culture and arts in response to the covid-19 outbreak will cover box office losses in the event that theatres produce outdoor work or socially-distanced indoor performances.

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. Guidance has been published by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for applicants to the Culture Recovery Grants application rounds, and by Arts Council England for applicants to the £270 million Repayable Finance Scheme.

Further details on costs that can be supported through the package are available in the published guidance with organisations being asked to provide a plan for how funding will enable them to achieve financial viability in the way that is appropriate for their organisation.

EDUCATION**■ Adoption Support Fund****Catherine McKinnell:**[\[76700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Adoption Support Fund, how many claims have been received on behalf of previously looked after children on special guardianship orders (a) in financial year 2019-20 and (b) since 1 April 2020; how many of those claims have been successful (i) in total and (ii) by local authority area; and

what the average amount awarded for those claims was (A) in total and (B) by local authority area.

Catherine McKinnell: [76701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Adoption Support Fund, how many claims have been received on behalf of adopted children (a) in financial year 2019-20 and (b) since 1 April 2020; how many of those claims have been successful (i) in total and (ii) by local authority area; and what the average amount awarded for those claims was (A) in total and (B) by local authority area.

Vicky Ford:

The information requested is set out in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. 76701_76701_PDF [76700_76701_adoption_application_table.pdf]

■ **Children in Care**

Catherine McKinnell: [76703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to amend the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 to allow contact between a looked-after child and a sibling that is not looked after.

Vicky Ford:

As set out in my response of PQ 18831

(<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-21/18831/>) on 23 February 2020, under section 34 of the Children Act 1989, children who are subject to a care order can apply to the court to make an order for contact with any named person, including their siblings. The child's social worker or the Independent Reviewing Officer can assist the child in obtaining legal advice or in establishing whether an appropriate adult is able and willing to provide such assistance or bring the proceedings on his/her behalf.

Contact can be very important in helping children and young people develop their sense of identity and understand their lives and their sense of self. The government believes that contact between a looked after child and their siblings is very important and should be encouraged.

Ultimately, contact arrangements should be focused on, and shaped around, the child's needs. The child's welfare is the paramount consideration at all times and each child's wishes and needs for contact should be individually considered and regularly assessed.

■ **Children in Care: Foster Care**

Catherine McKinnell: [76699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many of the looked-after children who were cared for in a friends and family foster placement were placed there as part of a

voluntary agreement under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 in (a) 31 March 2019, (b) 31 March 2018, (c) 31 March 2017 and (d) 31 March 2016.

Vicky Ford:

The figures requested are provided in the attached table.

The numbers of looked-after children as at 31 March in a foster placement with a relative or friend, under all legal statuses, are published annually in table A2 of the statistical release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

Attachments:

1. 76699 Table [76699 table .pdf]

■ **Children in Care: Pupil Premium**

Catherine McKinnell:

[76702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many previously looked after children on a (a) special guardianship order, (b) child arrangements order, (c) residence order and (d) adoption order in each local authority area received a pupil premium plus grant in 2020-21.

Vicky Ford:

The number of children previously looked after counted for Pupil Premium Plus in each local authority in 2020-21 are shown in the attached table, including the number of those on (a) special guardianship order, (b) child arrangements order, (c) residence order and (d) adoption order.

Attachments:

1. 76702 number of children counted for PP [76702 table of number of children counted for Pupil Premium Plus grant.xls]

■ **Children: Day Care**

Rachael Maskell:

[76788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Government plans to issue guidance on whether grandparents can provide childcare for their grandchildren as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Vicky Ford:

Anyone providing informal childcare, including grandparents looking after their grandchildren, will need to adhere to the social distancing guidance published by the Cabinet Office.

The 'staying alert and safe (social distancing)' guidance states that members of up to two households can meet indoors, provided that social distancing measures are adhered to.

Where there is only one adult in a household, they can make a 'support bubble' with another household of any size. Where a support bubble has been formed, social distancing measures from people within that bubble are not required.

The social distancing guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july#meeting-family-and-friends>.

Guidance on support bubbles can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july#making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>.

Information about looking after grandchildren can also be viewed at section 2.6 of the following guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>.

■ Edge Hill University

Rosie Cooper: [76647]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Universities Minister in his Department plans to provide a date and time for the meeting with the hon. Member for West Lancashire to discuss Edge Hill University.

Michelle Donelan:

I am due to meet the hon. Member for West Lancashire on 1 September 2020 and look forward to discussing the matter she raised with me in person.

■ Foster Care

Helen Hayes: [78768]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children are in relative or friend foster care placements as of 31 March 2019 by (a) ethnicity and (b) age of the child.

Helen Hayes: [78769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children were in relative or friend foster care placements as of 31 March 2019 by local authority.

Vicky Ford:

Figures are shown in the tables, attached.

The numbers of looked after children at 31 March in a foster placement with a relative or friend are published annually in table A2 of the statistical release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>.

An aggregate figure for all fostering placements by local authority is routinely published in the underlying data table (CLA2019) in the same release. However, this table does not show whether the placement is with a relative or friend or other foster carer. These figures are included in the table for this answer.

Attachments:

1. 78768 78769 table [78768 78769 table showing children looked after in fostering placements by relative or friend by ethnicity and age.xls]

■ Higher Education: Coronavirus**Fiona Bruce:****[77565]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that students receive value for money for university courses during the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Michelle Donelan:

This is a difficult and uncertain time for students, but the government is working with the higher education sector to make sure that all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies. We have seen some fantastic and innovative examples of high-quality online learning being delivered by providers.

The government expects universities to continue delivering a high-quality academic experience and to help students to achieve qualifications that they and employers value. We expect that higher education providers will be open for the autumn term, with a blend of online teaching and in-person tuition that they consider to be appropriate and in line with public health advice. To help providers make informed decisions about their provision in ways which minimise the risk to staff and students, the government has issued guidance for providers on reopening campuses and buildings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

The government is working with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, professional bodies and the Office for Students (OfS), the higher education regulator in England, to ensure that students continue to leave university with qualifications that have real value. The OfS has produced guidance on practical ways in which students can complete their studies whilst ensuring that quality and standards are upheld. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-quality-and-standards-during-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

It is an OfS registration condition that providers must deliver well-designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and that enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed. If providers are unable to facilitate good online tuition, they should seek to avoid charging students for any additional terms that they may need to undergo as a consequence, avoiding effectively charging them twice. Whether or not an individual student is entitled to a refund of fees will depend on the specific contractual arrangements between the provider and student.

If a student is concerned about their education, they should speak to their higher education provider in the first instance. The government expects student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly and sympathetically by higher education institutions to resolve any concerns. Students who are not satisfied with their provider's final response can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

for Higher Education to consider their complaint if their institution is based in England or Wales.

■ **Holiday Play Schemes: West Midlands**

Preet Kaur Gill: [77752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) holiday clubs that will be open and (b) holiday club places that will be available in (i) Edgbaston constituency, (ii) Birmingham and (iii) the West Midlands during the summer 2020 holiday period.

Preet Kaur Gill: [77753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of workers who will not return to work during the summer holidays in 2020 as a result of a lack of available childcare in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands.

Vicky Ford:

Early years providers have been able to open to all children from 1 June. Since 20 July, settings have been able to return to their normal group sizes, paving the way for more children to transition back to their early education and supporting parents to be able to work.

Holiday clubs and other out-of-school settings have been able to open since 4 July, helping parents to meet their childcare needs during the school summer holidays.

We have published guidance to support holiday clubs and out-of-school settings to operate as safely as possible over the summer holiday, alongside guidance for parents. This is available at:

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

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

Parents can contact their local Family Information Service for details of childcare provision available in their area during the summer holidays.

■ **Pupils: Stationery**

Margaret Greenwood: [78698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's Guidance for full opening: schools, what assessment he has made of the additional cost to parents of equipment such as pencils and pens identified in the guidance that individual pupils should have when schools open in full.

Nick Gibb:

All pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. On 2 July the Government 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>.

The published guidance provides advice to schools on the sharing and cleaning of resources and equipment. Whilst there is no expectation for parents to fund significant additional equipment, for individual and very frequently used equipment such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared.

For those most in need, the Government have injected around £9 billion into the welfare system to support those on low incomes to cope with the financial impact of COVID-19. This includes increases to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit, worth up to £1,040 this financial year, and increasing Local Housing Allowance rates - putting an average of £600 into people's pockets. This is in addition to the around £5 billion increase to the 2020/21 benefit rates uprating, including around £400 million more on children's benefits.

Schools: Attendance**Ian Mearns:****[77571]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 10 July 2020 to Question 64157, and with reference to the Parentkind survey results published on 16 July 2020, what steps he is taking to inform parents and carers that it is safe for children to return to school in September; and whether he plans to suspend fines for parents and carers who do not send children to school in September.

Nick Gibb:

All pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The Department has published guidance for parents and carers detailing what they need to know about education settings in the autumn term. The guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>.

On 2 July the Government published guidance on the full opening of schools, including a Public Health England endorsed system of controls which, when implemented alongside the school's own risk assessment, will create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced.

On 17 August, the Government launched a 'Back to School' campaign which seeks to reassure parents and explain measures that nurseries, childminders, schools and

colleges are taking to reduce the risk of transmission. The Department has worked closely with Department for Transport and Cabinet Office to support and inform parents.

It is vital that children and young people return to school for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. School attendance will again be mandatory from the beginning of the new academic year. For parents and carers of children of compulsory school age, this means that the legal duty as a parent to send a child to school regularly will apply.

Schools should work with families to ensure children are attending full time from September. As usual, fines will sit alongside this, but only as a last resort and where there is no valid reason for absence.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Margaret Greenwood:

[78699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's Guidance for full opening: schools, how many covid-19 home testing kits will be provided to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools; and by what date those testing kits will be provided.

Nick Gibb:

Anyone who displays symptoms of COVID-19 has access to a test, and is strongly encouraged to get tested. If a child or staff member in any education setting becomes symptomatic, they should be advised to get a test through existing channels.

Between 26 August and 3 September all schools and further education colleges will receive an initial supply of 10 home test kits. These should only be offered to individuals who have developed symptoms while at school or college (or to their parent/carer if under 18) in the exceptional circumstance that they may have barriers to accessing a test elsewhere and that giving them a home test kit directly will therefore significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. This will help schools and colleges to take swift action to protect students and staff in the event of a positive test result. Arrangements for ordering additional test kits will be confirmed in due course.

Guidance on the provision of home testing kits is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-home-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers>.

Margaret Greenwood:

[78700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's Guidance for full opening: schools, what assessment he has made of the effect on teacher workload of the need for schools to regularly monitor and review their preventative and protective covid-19 measures.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is grateful for the continued hard work of school leaders, teachers and support staff in their efforts to ensure that all pupils, in all year groups, are able to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.

On 2 July the Government published guidance on the full opening of schools, including a Public Health England endorsed system of controls which, when implemented alongside the school's own risk assessment, will create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. The guidance recognises that schools may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly in the new term, but is clear that any plans should avoid increases in unnecessary and unmanageable workload burdens.

To help reduce the burden on educational and care settings at the beginning of the outbreak, the Department for Education and its agencies cancelled or paused all but the most essential data collections, services and requests from educational and care settings until the end of June 2020. The Department published a master list on 20 April and promised to review those collections that were paused and extend the pause period if necessary. A review of the list has now taken place and the pause period has been extended to 30 September.

The Department also recently published a report by the Education Development Trust on school-led projects aimed at reducing teacher workload, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-education-development-trust-report> .

The success in participating schools using the workload reduction toolkit is an encouraging example of where schools can identify and address their particular workload challenges. The workload reduction toolkit is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workload-reduction-toolkit> .

The Department has also published a range of resources, including case studies to support remote education and help address staff workload. The case studies can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/case-studies-remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19> .

Over the next few months, the Department will continue to work closely with school leaders, teachers and their representatives to continue to address workload and provide support for schools.

Nadia Whittome:**[78939]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the funding required to enable schools to (a) build and (b) rent additional teaching space during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nadia Whittome:**[78940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to support schools that require additional teaching space in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

All pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. 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 are advised to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space, such as rooms in an associated place of worship for schools with a religious character, if feasible. We do not, however, consider it necessary for schools to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all children back to school. We also do not think schools will need to deliver any of their education on other sites (such as community centres and village halls) because class sizes can return to normal and spaces used by more than one class or group can be cleaned between use.

As stated in our 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.

Schools have been able to claim additional funding for exceptional costs incurred due to COVID-19 between March and July 2020, such as additional cleaning required due to confirmed or suspected coronavirus cases and increased premises costs to keep schools open for priority groups during the Easter and summer half term holidays. Schools have also continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6bn in 2020-21, £4.8bn in 2021-22 and £7.1bn in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

■ Students: Assessments

Kate Green: [76684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether (a) schools and (b) colleges are required to agree to requests from students wishing to enter the autumn exam series.

Kate Green: [76685]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if it is his policy to require (a) candidates or (b) schools and colleges to pay the entry fee for exams in the autumn series.

Kate Green: [76686]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate additional funding to schools to meet the cost of entering candidates in the autumn exam series.

Kate Green: [76687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding he plans to allocate to (a) schools and (b) colleges for the cost of (i) invigilators and (ii) venues for the autumn exam series.

Nick Gibb:

Students who are considering taking autumn exams should speak with their school or college and discuss their next best step.

The majority of students will now have the grades they need to move on to their next step. Those who did not receive a grade or who are unhappy with their grade will have the opportunity to take exams in the autumn. The Department have published guidance which makes it clear that they expect the school or college that entered students for the summer series to enter them for autumn if they want to sit exams. The Government is clear that given the unique circumstances in which the autumn exams are being run, students and their families should not have to meet the cost of fees if they want to enter.

So that schools and colleges have the support they need to run the additional autumn series, the Department is launching an Exam Support Service. Through this service, schools and colleges can book fully funded additional space to run exams if needed to avoid disruption to teaching. They will also be able to claim back for costs relating to autumn exam fees or invigilation where these exceed any savings they have made in those areas following the cancellation of summer exams. £30 million has been earmarked to deliver this support, although funding will be demand led and driven by the number of students who choose to sit the exams.

Further details can be found in our published guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series>.

■ Students: Commonwealth**Theresa Villiers:****[76627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of treating students from Commonwealth countries the same as students from England for the purposes of university fees.

Michelle Donelan:

To be eligible for home fee status in England, a student must have 'settled' status or a recognised connection with the UK on the first day of the first academic year of their course. This includes those who are covered by EU law, have long residence in this country or who have been granted international protection by the Home Office.

Students must normally have been resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) or, in some cases, the European Economic Area and Switzerland or UK/EU Overseas Territories, for the 3 years prior to that date.

Commonwealth citizens who have the right of abode in the UK are considered 'settled' and are eligible for home fee status on that basis.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Air Pollution: Ethnic Groups and Females****Geraint Davies:**[\[77491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of air pollution on (a) BAME communities and (b) women.

Rebecca Pow:

As part of the UK Plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), the Government reviewed evidence investigating the inequalities in the distributional impact of poor air quality. The published technical report references research conducted by Fecht et al (2015) that demonstrates that higher concentrations of NO₂ and coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀) have been observed in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

Additionally, in 2020 the Office for National Statistics published a report on Coronavirus mortality rates and air quality. Data analysis highlighted that ethnicity is strongly correlated with pollution exposure, with ethnic minorities more likely to live in polluted areas. To date, the Government has not investigated whether there are air pollution inequalities between women and men. Such analysis would be particularly challenging due to the fixed nature of the Government's air quality monitoring stations; the monitoring network limits our ability to make robust inferences about air pollution exposure at places of work, within households or at an individual level.

The Government is taking a proactive approach to tackling air pollution concentrations through the NO₂ plan and Clean Air Strategy, both of which will improve air quality across the UK. Furthermore, those actions that focus on reducing the highest concentrations of harmful pollutants will disproportionately benefit ethnically diverse communities that are located in areas of poor air quality.

■ Beef: Prices**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[77574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the price paid to beef farmers by wholesalers.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra monitors the UK agricultural markets including commodity prices and long-term trends. The beef sector has shown resilience and current prices are above the 5-year average.

We want all farmers to get a fair price for their products and the Government is committed to tackling any unfairness that may exist in the agri-food supply chain. Through the Agriculture Bill we have set out ambitious plans to improve transparency in the supply chain, strengthening the position of those who produce our food.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[76841]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Health and Safety Executive is taking to ensure it has the capacity to (a) implement legally enforceable (i) restrictions on and (ii) authorisations for chemicals after the transition period and (b) access chemicals regulation information in the period before a replacement for the European Chemicals Agency database is created.

Rebecca Pow:

At the end of the transition period, EU REACH will be transposed into UK law. Defra has been working closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Environment Agency and the Devolved Administrations to develop the processes for restriction and authorisation and we are confident that the processes will be operational when the domestic regime comes into force.

Under the domestic legislation, the Secretary of State will make a decision on a restriction on the basis of a proposal dossier and an opinion prepared by the HSE. To give this restriction legal effect, the Secretary of State will make and lay a statutory instrument to amend annex XVII of the domestic regime. If the restriction relates to a matter of devolved competency, the Secretary of State will seek the consent of the Devolved Administrations when making the decision.

A company must apply for and be granted an authorisation if it wishes to place on the market or use any substance that is on the authorisation list. Under domestic legislation, the Secretary of State will make the decision on whether an authorisation will be granted. Again, if the authorisation relates to a matter of devolved competency, the Secretary of State will seek the consent of the Devolved Administrations when making the decision. This decision and the reasons for it will be sent to the applicant and the HSE and the decision will be published. The Secretary of State's decision will be made on the basis of the HSE's opinion on the application for authorisation.

Our REACH legislation also provides transitional provisions for UK-based companies that hold (EU) REACH authorisations or are registered downstream users of authorisations at the end of the transition period or where the authorisation application has reached the stage where the European Chemicals Agency has adopted an opinion, but the Commission has not yet granted a decision.

The aim of the transitional provisions we have put in place is to strike a balance which provides for a database to underpin robust, evidence-based regulation while placing achievable duties on business. Existing UK registrations and the duties on registrants will remain unbroken from Day 1. These duties include the duty to identify, transmit and apply appropriate risk management measures for chemicals, and the duty to hold all information relevant to their registration and to provide it to the UK regulator.

Our transitional provisions provide grace periods within which registrants must submit the data required to underpin their registration to the regulator. We have listened to concerns raised by stakeholders about the current timelines to supply that data and as a result, we intend to extend the existing registration deadlines set in legislation (subject to parliamentary and devolved administration scrutiny). This will allow industry more time to reach agreement with commercial partners to access the chemical substance registration data that they need and therefore reduce the risks of disruption to supply chains.

UK companies that have already registered a chemical with ECHA will be “grandfathered” into the UK system with no break in their legal access to the market. Those registrants would then have 120 days from UK REACH coming into force to provide UK authorities with some initial information on their substance.

The initial notification stage for UK downstream users of EU based registrations has been extended from 180 to 300 days from 1 January 2021. This is to allow UK downstream users the opportunity to assess how existing UK based registrants meet the 120-day deadline before starting their own 180-day process. We have also extended the deadline for completing a full registration supported by full data packages to 2, 4 and 6 years from the end of the initial 300-day period. The deadline for final submission of data underpinning the full registration is dependent on tonnage bands and hazard profile, with the highest tonnage and most hazardous chemicals first.

■ Dogs: Meat

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[78532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals on making (a) possession and (b) consumption of dog meat an offence in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member for Romford to the reply given on 9 June to his earlier question asked on 1 June (UIN 51680).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-01/51680/>

■ Fisheries: Iceland

Emma Hardy:

[\[77786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Icelandic counterpart on access to Icelandic waters for British fisherman as the UK becomes an independent coastal state.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra officials engage regularly with their Icelandic counterparts across a wide variety of policy issues. Recent discussions have focused on the UK's application for membership of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), fisheries

management matters within the North-East Atlantic, and enhancing UK-Iceland cooperation through the recently signed Joint Vision for 2030. The UK's fisheries relationship with Iceland is likely to evolve further as the UK goes forward as an independent coastal State.

■ Furniture: Fire Resistant Materials

Geraint Davies:

[\[76561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure that flame retardant chemicals from end-life sofas and mattresses are prevented from polluting (a) the air, (b) rivers and (c) oceans.

Rebecca Pow:

The Stockholm Convention bans or restricts the use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) that are toxic, persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in humans and animals, and have long-ranging properties. The Convention has banned some chemicals that have historically been used as flame retardants in sofas and mattresses and the UK supported this action. Those bans are in force in the UK.

To prevent POPs entering the environment, the waste industry has a legal requirement to destroy POPs where they are present in waste articles above a threshold limit. We have recently completed a study to better understand the use of two of the most commonly used flame retardants in soft furnishings before they were banned, decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE) and hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD). We will now use this information as a basis on which to work with the waste industry to review management of soft furnishings. This will ensure that articles most likely to contain POPs are destroyed at the end of their life, preventing pollution.

■ Furs: Coronavirus

Christian Wakeford:

[\[78947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to review the potential merits of a ban on fur in response to evidence from Spain that mink fur farms can act as a reservoir for covid-19.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 (2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland). While fur farming is legal in some EU countries, there are strict rules in place to ensure that animals kept for fur production are farmed, trapped and killed humanely.

During the transition period, it is not possible to introduce restrictions relating to the fur trade. Once our future relationship with the EU has been established there will be an opportunity for the Government to consider further steps it could take in relation to fur sales.

In relation to the outbreaks of COVID-19 on mink farms in Europe, keepers are taking this seriously and implementing disease control measures, which include culling the animals on affected farms and ensuring that these animals will not be used for fur.

■ Glyphosate

Rosie Duffield:

[76844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to undertake an independent assessment of the safety of glyphosate as part of the forthcoming National Action Plan for the Sustainable use of Pesticides.

Victoria Prentis:

All pesticides are subject to strict regulation, which requires that they can only be authorised for use if a scientific assessment finds that this will not harm people or have unacceptable impacts on the environment. Authorisations are subject to regular review. The safety of glyphosate has been scrutinised in this way and glyphosate products are authorised for use.

The Government will publish for consultation a draft of the revised National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides later this year. The National Action Plan will expand on the approach set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan to reduce further the impacts of pesticide use while protecting crops. At the centre of this will be encouraging the development and uptake of Integrated Pest Management, under which farming systems are designed to minimise the need for pesticides and to make use of alternative approaches wherever possible.

■ Grapes: Imports

Ms Harriet Harman:

[77490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce regulations to allow the importation of grapes from third countries, including the EU, for British wine production after the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Rt Hon. Member to the answer I gave to the Member for Bermondsey and Old Southwark on 19 June 2020, PQ UIN 58716.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-11/58716]

The Government will keep the rules on the production and marketing of wine under review.

The restrictions identified in my previous response apply to wine produced from fresh grapes, as defined under the customs nomenclature (CN) code 2204. The product 'British' wine is classified under CN 2206 (other fermented beverage). It will still be possible to produce British wine from imported grape juice.

■ Litter

Fiona Bruce:

[76664]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce littering in public places.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government published its Litter Strategy for England in April 2017, setting out our aim to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering within a generation. The Litter Strategy focuses on three key themes: education and awareness; improving enforcement; and better cleaning and access to bins. A copy of the Litter Strategy can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/litter-strategy-for-england.

The "Keep it, Bin it" campaign, which is run by Defra with support from Keep Britain Tidy, encourages people to dispose of their waste responsibly and calls time on rubbish excuses for littering. In addition to this national campaign, and in response to recent reports of littering as people start to enjoy outdoor spaces once more, Defra has supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks campaign, which encourages people to treat our parks with respect this summer. Further information about the campaign is available at:

www.keeptobritaintidy.org/news/new-campaign-launched-face-littering-epidemic-parks.

Defra has also launched a 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign this summer. This has been promoted both online and in locations near to urban parks, beaches and national parks to further highlight the impacts of littering, among other things.

It remains an offence to drop litter, and councils have legal powers to take enforcement action against offenders. Following consultation, with effect from April 2018, we increased the maximum fixed penalty for littering from £80 to £150, and from April 2019, the minimum fixed penalty was also raised from £50 to £65. We have also given councils in England (outside London) new civil penalty powers to tackle littering from vehicles. Councils can issue the keeper of a vehicle from which litter is thrown with a civil penalty of between £65 and £150.

The Government has, in its 2019 manifesto, committed to introduce a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers to secure an increase in recycling and reuse of materials, and to reduce the incidence of littering. We plan to undertake a second consultation on a DRS in early 2021.

■ Litter: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers:

[76631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support local authorities tackle increased littering during the covid-19 lockdown.

Rebecca Pow:

We recognise that in the current circumstances local authorities may have more challenges than usual, including when collecting waste. The Government has responded with an unprecedented £4.3 billion support package for local authorities.

This includes £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants which can be used by councils to meet local priorities including, should they see fit, cleaning up litter. Defra has also published guidance for local authorities on the prioritisation of waste collection services.

Defra has also supported, and provided funding for, Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks campaign, which encourages people to treat our parks with respect this summer. Further information about the campaign is available at:

www.KeepBritainTidy.org/news/new-campaign-launched-face-littering-epidemic-parks.

Defra has also launched a 'Respect the Outdoors' campaign this summer. This has been promoted both online and in locations near to urban parks, beaches and national parks to further highlight the impacts of littering, as well as unauthorised barbeques and campfires, and breaches of the countryside code.

It remains an offence to drop litter, and councils have legal powers to take enforcement action against offenders. Anyone caught littering may be prosecuted in a magistrates' court, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500 on conviction. Instead of prosecuting, councils may decide to issue a fixed penalty of between £65 and £150.

■ Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[76842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18441 on Per- and Polyfluorinated Alkyl Substances and with reference to the delay in publishing the Government's Chemicals Strategy, if he will take steps to introduce a restriction on those chemicals as a group in line with the EU REACH restriction proposal ahead of that strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) constitute a group of thousands of chemicals that are widely used in consumer and industrial products.

A number of PFAS are already banned or highly restricted. There are existing restrictions on the use of certain PFAS under the Stockholm Convention, to which the UK is a signatory, and under the REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulations.

At the end of the Transition Period the UK will put in place its own independent chemicals regulatory framework, UK REACH. Existing restrictions under REACH will be brought into UK law and therefore will continue to apply in the UK. Our commitments as a signatory to the Stockholm Convention will also continue to apply.

Future UK decisions to control the environmental and human health impacts of substances will be taken under our independent regime and will be based on rigorous assessment of the scientific evidence, including looking at approaches taken by chemical regimes across the world.

Defra continues to work with regulators to improve the understanding of the emissions and risks of PFAS in the UK.

■ **Pets: Travel**

Helen Hayes:

[\[76799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office's oral contribution of 13 July 2020, Official Report, column 1276, what additional procedures pet owners will have to follow beyond those that currently exist; and what estimate he has made of the potential additional cost to pet owners of those procedures.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is working with the European Commission to ensure that pet travel between the UK and EU continues smoothly after January 2021. The UK and Crown Dependencies has submitted its application to become a Part 1 listed third country under Annex II of the EU Pet Travel Regulations to the European Commission, and this is our preferred position. It is now for the Commission to consider our application for listed status.

■ **Public Footpaths: Coastal Areas**

James Wild:

[\[76900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects to respond to the Natural England's report on the Weybourne to Hunstanton proposals for the England Coast Path submitted to his department on 21 March 2018; and when he expects to receive proposals from Natural England for the Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge section.

James Wild:

[\[76901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to Natural England's report on proposals for the Weybourne to Hunstanton England Coast Path submitted to his Department on 21 March 2018.

Rebecca Pow:

A decision regarding the Coastal Access Report on Weybourne to Hunstanton has been delayed due to the European Court ruling known as People Over Wind. Natural England is reviewing the relevant Habitats Regulations Assessment in compliance with this ruling. In addition, a number of objections were received following the publication of Natural England's initial report. Defra has appointed an independent planning inspector to examine these objections.

This evidence will need to be considered as part of the Secretary of State's decision on the proposals.

Natural England is still finalising its reports for the stretch between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge. Work on the reports has been delayed by Covid-19, and Natural England now expects to submit its proposals in the autumn.

Rivers: Conservation

James Wild: [\[77826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding (a) his Department and (b) the Environment Agency has made available for the restoration of chalk streams in each year since 2012.

James Wild: [\[77827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding his Department plans to make available for the restoration of chalk streams in the next three years.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra and the Environment Agency are undertaking a wide range of measures to protect and improve chalk streams - reducing abstraction, progressing measures on water conservation, working to improve water quality and legislating through the Environment Bill.

Details of Government spend through the Water Environment Improvement Programme are shown in an attachment.

Further investment is made direct by water companies. For example, Affinity Water and the Environment Agency have been working together with other partners to protect and revitalise the rivers in the Chilterns. The programme has reduced groundwater abstraction by 63 million litres of water a day since 1993 and is committed to further reducing groundwater abstraction by 36 million litres of water a day by 2025. Affinity Water has committed to continuing this work and has over 50 different restoration projects planned over the next five years, representing an investment of over £17 million.

To calculate the exact spend by the Government and water industry on chalk streams in the past would not be possible without further time and analysis. Future funding is conditional on decisions that will be taken through the Spending Review.

Attachments:

1. Government Spending on WEI Programme [PQs 77826 77827 Attachment - Government Spend on WEI Program.pdf]

Supermarkets: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell: [\[77529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to promote registration for supermarket priority slots for people who (a) are shielding and (b) have arthritis during the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

In March, the Government took swift action to ensure continued access to food for the most vulnerable. Information on how to register for food support, including priority delivery slots has been available on GOV.UK since then.

Working with other Government departments we have attempted to call all those who registered for food support. During these calls we explained the priority delivery slot scheme and encouraged them to sign up for an account with a participating supermarket. We also included information in food boxes which were delivered to those with no other means of accessing food.

Our latest figures show that less than 26,000 of those 500,000 people registered for support were not able to access priority deliveries. We recently contacted these people by email and letter, encouraging them to sign up for an account with a participating supermarket. Supermarkets will continue to match individuals and supply the most vulnerable with priority delivery slots.

■ **Total Allowable Catches**

Helen Hayes: [\[77713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the level set for the Total Allowable Catch for fish stocks of interest to the UK.

Helen Hayes: [\[78767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Total Allowable Catches set at the Agrifish Council in December 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has assessed the outcomes of the 2019 December EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council concerning the setting of Total Allowable Catches for 2020 for fish stock of interest to the UK. This assessment considers the direct monetary value of the negotiated outcome and sustainability in terms of the number of stocks being fished at or below their Maximum Sustainable Yield.

I provided this assessment to both the Chair of the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union on 1 April 2020.

■ **Water: Norfolk**

James Wild: [\[77828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress the Environment Agency has made in its plan to de-main eleven watercourses in Norfolk, announced in 2017.

Rebecca Pow:

Overall across the country, the de-maining pilot project resulted in the Environment Agency (EA):

- redesignating 16 stretches or 63.8 km of main river to ordinary watercourse;
- transferring 28 assets and 178 acres of land to Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs).

The statutory guidance to the EA for the designation of main rivers requires that the EA should consider relevant benefits or costs for the local community and representations from the local community and others in response to consultation.

Of the 11 watercourses in Norfolk, eight were withdrawn at an early stage due to concerns raised in May 2018 at the Environment, Development, and Transport committee of Norfolk County Council about the potential increases to special levy for District Councils.

In November 2018, the EA formally consulted on the proposal to de-main three watercourses at Tunstall Dyke, Waxham New Cut and the River Tud, which are wholly within IDB areas.

The consultation found that overall consultees did not support the proposal to de-main the River Tud due to concerns over the environmental management. Consultees were either neutral or in support of proposals to de-main the Waxham New Cut and Tunstall Dyke. The EA withdrew the River Tud from the pilot in January 2019.

In May 2019, the EA decided to pause the Norfolk pilot and withdrew the proposals for the remaining two watercourses due to an ongoing investigation into waste management irregularities, the outcome of which may be relevant to who should manage the de-mained watercourses. The EA will not comment further on this while the investigation is ongoing, nor will the de-maining pilot proceed until the investigation has been concluded.

The EA may decide at some point in the future to revisit these proposals. Until then, these two watercourses will continue to be Main River and the Environment Agency will retain its permissive powers to maintain them.

■ Wildlife: Smuggling

Emily Thornberry:

[\[78559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when her Department last held discussions with its international counterparts on tackling the illegal trade in wildlife and endangered species.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK plays a leading role in driving the global response to eradicate illegal wildlife trade and regularly holds discussions with its international counterparts.

In 2018, the UK convened the largest ever global Illegal Wildlife Trade conference at which 65 countries signed up to the London Declaration, committing to take urgent, coordinated action against illegal wildlife trade.

Since then, the UK has raised the importance of tackling illegal wildlife trade to protect biodiversity and endangered species with other countries during regular bilaterals and during meetings under international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

■ Wines: Imports

Neil Coyle:

[\[78691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2020 to Written Question 60862, if he will commit to undertaking an impact assessment on the decision to require import certificates on wine from 1 January 2021 on (a) UK wine exporters, (b) UK wine importers, (c) UK wine consumers and (d) the hospitality industry.

Neil Coyle:

[\[78692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2020 to Question 60862, what estimate he has made of the revenue to the Exchequer resulting from the decision to roll over EU import VI-1 certificates for wine.

Victoria Prentis:

The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will transfer existing EU wine regulations, including import certification requirements, onto the UK statute book. This will mean that EU wines will become subject to the same import requirements as wine arriving from countries like Australia, USA, Chile and South Africa, which currently account for 50% of wine on UK shelves. There are no plans to carry out an impact assessment of what this change will mean for EU wine imports or to estimate the effect it will have on Exchequer receipts. The Wine and Spirit Trade Association has estimated that the cost of fulfilling new import certification arrangements would add approximately 10 pence to each bottle of EU wine, which equates to less than a 2% increase on an average priced wine.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ African Union

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[78816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last met with President Cyril Ramaphosa in his role as African Union Chair.

James Duddridge:

The UK and South Africa enjoy a strong bilateral relationship. Through our High Commission in Pretoria we regularly engage with the South African Government on African Union (AU) and regional issues. The Foreign Secretary has spoken twice with the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, since South Africa became AU Chair, and I spoke with my South African counterpart, Mr Alvin Botes, on 16 July. I also met a number of senior AU officials including Kwesi Quartey (Acting Chairperson), Albert M Muchanga (Commissioner for Trade and Industry), Amira El Fadil (Commissioner for Social Affairs), and Smail Chergui (Peace & Security Commissioner) during my visit to Ethiopia in July.

■ Andrew Buncombe**Catherine West:**[\[76819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to his US counterpart on the arrest and detention in Seattle of the Independent's correspondent Andrew Buncombe.

Wendy Morton:

The arrest is very concerning. Our Embassy in Washington has registered our concern with US authorities. Journalists all around the world must be free to do their jobs and to hold authorities to account without fear of arrest or violence.

■ Bahrain: Capital Punishment**Zarah Sultana:**[\[77825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Bahraini counterpart on allegations of (a) torture and (b) due process violations in the case of (i) Mohammed Ramadhan and (ii) Husain Moosa who have been sentenced to death in that country; and what recent comparative assessment he has made of the accuracy of (A) Bahrain's Special Investigation Unit, (B) the Bahraini Ombudsman and (C) independent experts at the International Rehabilitation for Torture Victims.

James Cleverly:

Lord Ahmad, the Minister of State responsible for human rights, publicly expressed our deep concern at the decision by Bahrain's Court of Cassation to uphold the death penalty verdicts imposed on Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa on 13 July. We have raised both cases at senior levels with the Government of Bahrain. The Bahraini Government is fully aware that the UK opposes the death penalty, in all circumstances, as a matter of principle.

The UK welcomed the investigation by the Ombudsman and Special Investigation Unit into the cases of Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa, ultimately leading to their retrial - a first in Bahrain.

The UK is committed to supporting Bahrain's oversight bodies, including the Ministry of Interior Ombudsman and the independent Special Investigations Unit. We continue to believe that Bahrain is taking steps in the right direction to improve its performance on justice and security issues. The support we provide to these bodies, including in partnership with UN Development Programme, contributes to the ongoing development of their capacity and capability, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16.

The UK Government takes note of a number of sources of information when making assessments on Bahrain. Our latest assessment was published as part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Human Rights and Democracy Report in July 2020.

Stephen Farry:

[\[77846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will make its future assistance to Bahrain contingent on a decrease in or end to that country's use of death penalty.

James Cleverly:

We continue to believe that Bahrain is taking steps in the right direction to improve its human rights record, in line with the Government's Plan which built on the reform recommendations set out in the 2012 Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry Report. Whilst we and the Government of Bahrain acknowledge this is a work in progress, our support for this Bahrain-led reform is helping to build effective and accountable institutions, strengthen the rule of law and deliver justice reform. All our support is in line with international standards, and aims to share the UK's expertise and experience.

■ **British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus**

Catherine West:

[\[76818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information he holds on covid-19 deaths of British citizens in (a) the US and (b) other overseas countries.

Wendy Morton:

From 1 March 2020 we have recorded on our case management system cases specifically related to COVID-19. Since then we have supported 49 individuals who were diagnosed with COVID-19 and subsequently died. Fewer than five of these individuals were in the US. We have also provided consular assistance to 92 British nationals globally who were affected by the virus, for example a welfare concern, who have subsequently died, fewer than five of these individuals were in the US. These individuals may or may not have died of Covid-19. We are only aware of those cases that are reported to us and these figures do not necessarily represent the total affected. Where British nationals die overseas we can provide information and advice on local arrangements and where possible consular teams will refer the bereaved to relevant organisations, or provide information on such organisations, that can support them at what is a very difficult time. The above figures are correct as of 21 August.

■ **Chile: Human Rights**

Owen Thompson:

[\[78734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the risk to (a) the legal protection of human rights and (b) the compliance of Chile with international law and bilateral treaties posed by the Chilean Government's recent (i) Critical Infrastructure Bill, (ii) Anti-looting Bill and (iii) Cooperation with the International Criminal Court Bill.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government has made clear our concerns about allegations of human rights abuses by members of the Chilean security forces since October 2019. Our Ambassador in Chile has expressed those concerns to the Chilean government. We welcome the Chilean government's acceptance of reports and recommendations by the UN and Human Rights Watch and note their assurances, in public and to our Ambassador, that allegations of human rights abuses will be investigated fully. We are aware of the three pieces of legislation referenced and continue to monitor the human rights situation in Chile closely.

China: Capital Punishment**Stephen Doughty:**[\[76719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations (a) he has and (b) officials of his Department have made to the Government of China on abolishing the death penalty in that country in the last 12 months.

Nigel Adams:

Recent discussions with the Chinese authorities in China on human rights have focused on the situation in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, which the Foreign Secretary has raised directly with his Chinese counterpart. However, we have urged the Chinese authorities on many occasions to reduce their use of capital punishment, in line with global trends. The UK Government opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle.

China: Diplomatic Relations**Jim Shannon:**[\[77620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with his (a) Australian, (b) Malaysian, (c) Indonesian and (d) Japanese counterparts on diplomatic steps to help ensure that the Chinese Government upholds its international obligations.

Nigel Adams:

As the Foreign Secretary stated on 20 July, we expect China, as a fellow member of the G20 and a fellow permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, to live up to the international obligations and the international responsibilities that come with that stature. The UK's approach to China remains clear-eyed and rooted in our values and interests. Where we have concerns we raise them, and we work closely with a range of international partners to counter Chinese activity that threatens our values and collective security. The Foreign Secretary is in frequent contact with his Asia-Pacific counterparts to discuss a range of issues, including China. He most recently spoke to (a) Australian Foreign Minister Payne on 15 July, to (b) Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin on 20 April, to (c) Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno on 1 April and to (d) Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi on 5 August. The Foreign

Secretary and senior officials continue to engage regularly on China with a broad range of international partners beyond those specifically mentioned above.

■ **China: Sanctions**

Owen Thompson:

[\[76791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is establishing an evidence base with the aim of introducing sanctions on Chinese nationals involved in (a) the human rights abuses committed against Uighur Muslims and (b) actions against democracy in Hong Kong.

Nigel Adams:

On 6 July, the Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament. The Foreign Secretary has been clear that it is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated in the future, as this could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

Apsana Begum:

[\[76907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of including Chinese officials who have allegedly been implicated in the persecution of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the next round of Magnitsky sanctions designations.

Nigel Adams:

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime. It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

Jim Shannon:

[\[78671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to take account of the judgment of the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China when making an assessment of the application of Magnitsky sanctions; and whether he plans to include in the list of targets for sanctions people named in that tribunal's judgment as responsible for that crime.

Nigel Adams:

The FCO are carefully considering further suggestions for designations under the Global Human Rights regime. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt who may be designated as we do not want to reduce the impact of the designations

■ China: Uighurs**Apsana Begum:** [\[77829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the drone footage released by War on Fear showing blindfolded Uighur communities in China being transferred from the Xinjiang province in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the footage, which was initially published online in September 2019. Open source analysis indicates the people shown in the footage are Uyghur or other minorities in Xinjiang. We judge this analysis to be credible. The footage adds to the growing body of evidence on the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

Chris Law: [\[78708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will take steps to implement the recommendation of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales which has called on countries to give effect to their responsibilities under the relevant treaties to create, maintain and utilise international bodies to carry out investigations and due diligence in respect of China's alleged violations of its obligations and responsibilities concerning its Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim populations.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the Bar Human Rights Committee report published on 22 July. We are carefully considering its findings. We regularly raise our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including at the UN Human Rights Council on 30 June.

Chris Law: [\[78709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is taking steps to implement the recommendation of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales and use all available offices and legal means to investigate, apprehend and punish alleged perpetrators of any violations being committed against Uyghur and Turkic Muslim populations.

Nigel Adams:

We are aware of the Bar Human Rights Committee report published on 22 July. We are carefully considering its findings. We regularly raise our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including at the UN Human Rights Council on 30 June.

■ Cyprus: Coronavirus**Mike Hill:** [\[78844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he is having with his counterpart in Cyprus on allowing British citizens to travel there to deal with family emergencies and bereavements.

Wendy Morton:

Since 1 August, visitors from the UK have been able to travel to Cyprus. Visitors must provide a negative COVID-19 test result on arrival, obtained within 72 hours before travel. Requirements for entry into Cyprus are of course a matter for the Cypriot authorities. Further information on the current entry requirements for Cyprus is available from FCO travel advice via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cyprus/entry-requirements>.

■ Egypt: Capital Punishment**Stephen Doughty:**[\[76718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations (a) he has and (b) officials of his Department have made to the Government of Egypt on abolishing the death penalty in that country in the last 12 months.

James Cleverly:

It remains a long-standing policy of the United Kingdom to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. We continue to make our position clear to the Egyptian authorities, including in our Advanced Questions to Egypt during its Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council in November 2019.

■ Ethiopia: Politics and Government**Munira Wilson:**[\[77824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of UK online activity on the political situation in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

A number of Ethiopian political groupings have an online presence in countries around the world, including the UK. We do not assess that Ethiopian-linked online activity emanating from the UK has significantly impacted the political situation in Ethiopia.

■ Ethiopia: Violence**Munira Wilson:**[\[77823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Ethiopian counterpart on tackling ethnic and political violence in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by reports of violence and displacement of people in a number of regions in Ethiopia, and continues to raise the importance of human rights with the Government of Ethiopia at the highest levels. I raised this most recently with the Government of Ethiopia when visiting Addis Ababa at the end of July. The UK supports the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to strengthen accountability and

has been encouraged by their efforts to open the political space - in particular the release of thousands of political prisoners and the reform of legislation which constrained civil and political rights. We are committed to supporting civil society organisations in Ethiopia so that they can play an increasing role in monitoring rights.

■ **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill: [76833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance his Department has disbursed to (a) Least Developed, (b) Other Low Income, (c) Lower Middle Income and (d) Upper Middle Income countries in each of the last five years.

James Cleverly:

All information on ODA spending is available at the following GOV.UK link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-on-international-development>.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill: [78804]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of his Department's Official Development Assistance budget for each year of the 2019 Parliament.

James Cleverly:

On 21 July the Chancellor announced a Comprehensive Spending Review. This will set the resource budget for the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and all departments that spend Official Development Assistance until 2024 and for capital budgets until 2025.

■ **FSO Safer**

Gill Furniss: [77738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release entitled, UK warns of catastrophic environmental threat from hazardous Yemeni oil tanker, what diplomatic steps he is taking to tackle the (a) humanitarian, (b) environmental and (c) economic threat posed by a potential oil spill from the FSO Safer oil tanker in the Red Sea.

James Cleverly:

The FSO SAFER oil tanker is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. Unless UN experts are allowed to access it, we are facing a catastrophic environmental threat. The Houthis cannot continue to hold the environment and people's livelihoods to ransom. It is in everyone's interests, especially the suffering people of Yemen, that this tanker is made safe immediately. In support of UN efforts, we have raised this directly with the Houthis and with other leaders to try avert an avoidable crisis. We are also working with the UN and other donors to ensure there is sufficient funding and that contingency plans are in place should a spill occur in the interim.

■ Germany: Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps

Robert Largan: [\[78909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his German counterpart on that country's detention of people suspected spying for Iran's Quds Force.

Robert Largan: [\[78910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of Iranians espionage activity in Europe on the (a) national and (b) regional security.

James Cleverly:

We do not routinely comment on intelligence matters or specific threats. We continue to use all the tools at our disposal to counter threats to national security, working with our allies. On 8 January 2019, the UK and a number of European partners jointly raised with Iran our deep concerns about hostile activities and plots being planned and perpetrated in Europe. We have long expressed our deep concerns about the destabilising activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and IRGC Qods Force. The Government is clear that Iran should instead look to play a constructive role in regional stability.

■ Guatemala: Courts

Catherine West: [\[77734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Guatemalan counterpart on the maintenance of the independence of the Constitutional Court in that country.

Catherine West: [\[77735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support anti-corruption efforts and promote the rule of law and judicial independence in Guatemala.

Wendy Morton:

Our Embassy in Guatemala City is actively supporting anti-corruption efforts and the promotion of the rule of law and judicial independence in Guatemala. Her Majesty's Ambassador Nick Whittingham recently demonstrated support for Judge Aifan through a meeting as well as a subsequent social media post. Moving forward, our Embassy is planning a series of virtual meetings and events that will promote the importance of the separation of powers, a strong judiciary, and the rule of law. It will be engaging with the Guatemalan Government, domestic civil society organisations, lawyers, academics, and the private sector.

■ Hezbollah and Yemen: Weapons

John Lamont: [\[77765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UN Security Council resolutions (a) 1540, (b) 1701 and (c) 2216 in prohibiting the proliferation of weapons to Hezbollah and the Houthis.

John Lamont: [\[77766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the (a) weapons arsenals and (b) origin of weaponry of (i) Hezbollah and (ii) the Houthis.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains concerned by reports that Hizballah continues to amass an arsenal of weapons in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. We regularly raise this at the UN Security Council, and we call on all parties to abide by the provisions of the relevant UNSCRs. The UK is also concerned that, according to the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen, military equipment of Iranian origin was introduced into Yemen after the imposition of the targeted arms embargo, in violation of Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015). This reaffirms our concerns about destabilising Iranian activity in Yemen and the wider region.

■ Hong Kong: Christianity

Carla Lockhart: [\[77848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help protect Hong Kong's Christian community from the effects of the new National Security Law.

Nigel Adams:

We will continue to work with our international partners to stand up for the people of Hong Kong, whatever their religion or belief, to call out the violation of their rights and freedoms, and to hold China to their international obligations freely assumed under international law.

■ Hopewell Chin'ono

Sarah Champion: [\[77637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussion he has had with his Zimbabwean counterpart on the recent arrest of the journalist Hopewell Chin'ono on the charge of inciting violence as a result of his reporting of alleged corruption at high levels in the Government in Zimbabwe.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply worried by the arrest of Hopewell Chin'ono on 20 July, and by his continued detention. I tweeted on 23 July to express my concern at the treatment of Mr Chin'ono and to urge the Zimbabwean authorities to uphold the right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed by Zimbabwe's constitution. When I spoke to the

Zimbabwean Foreign Minister, Sibusiso Moyo, on 8 June, I urged him to ensure the Government of Zimbabwe makes concrete progress on human rights and respects the rule of law. The British Ambassador to Harare also met with the Zimbabwean Foreign Minister on Friday 14 August and raised our concerns. Officials at the British Embassy in Harare are closely following developments on Mr Chin'ono's case.

The UK is committed to the promotion of media freedom and the protection of journalists. Media freedom is an essential quality of any open society. People must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, to challenge their governments, and to make decisions informed by a strong and robust media. Zimbabwe is one of the UK's Media Freedom Focus Countries: we have called on the Government of Zimbabwe to commit to the Global Pledge on Media Freedom and to end the harassment of journalists, improve legislation and work with the international community to protect media freedom.

■ **Huang Jiefu**

Jim Shannon:

[\[78672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to include Huang Jiefu former Vice Minister for Health in China who has been held responsible for China's practice of forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in the Magnitsky sanctions list.

Nigel Adams:

The FCO are carefully considering further suggestions for designations under the Global Human Rights regime. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review. It would not be appropriate to pre-empt who may be designated as we do not want to reduce the impact of the designations.

■ **Human Rights: Sanctions**

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[77810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to co-ordinate the use of the Global Human Rights sanction regime with his counterparts overseas.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is a global leader on sanctions, based on the smart, targeted use of sanctions, as part of wider political and diplomatic strategies. The UK will look to coordinate with international partners, like the US and Canada, who use sanctions to address human rights issues, to ensure there is no safe haven for torturers, killers, enslavers, and their enablers. As sanctions are most effective when applied in concert with partners, we look forward to continuing to coordinate with partners in the future.

■ India: Coronavirus**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[78837]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2020 to Question 76100 on India: coronavirus, for what reasons repatriation flights from India did not initially include the Punjab; for what reasons (a) New Delhi, (b) Goa and (c) Mumbai were selected for initial repatriation flights; what assessment his Department has made of the effect of those decisions on UK residents in India; what information sources the Government used to reach those decisions; and whether more people were repatriated from the Punjab region than any other region of India.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[78838]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 22 July 2020 to Questions 76100 and 76099, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK residents stranded abroad in Punjab as a result of the covid-19 pandemic who registered with his Department for flights to return to the UK as a result of his Department not being able to determine how many of those residents remain stranded.

Nigel Adams:

We believe the vast majority of British travellers seeking to return to the UK - who don't have commercial options - have now done so. Through our embassies, and a dedicated central team, we continue to support British nationals who need consular support and are working to ensure commercial routes are maintained.

We have brought nearly 18,000 people back to the UK on 66 chartered flights from India, including from New Delhi, Goa, Mumbai, 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. 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 British Airways flights which are now running from India. The British High Commission is in contact with airlines, the Indian authorities, and other governments to make sure that more commercial options for returning to the UK are available as soon as possible.

Repatriation flights from the Punjab started just five days into the repatriation operation. We estimate that of the 18,000 people who returned to the UK, over 8,000 returned from the Punjab on 29 charter flights between 13 April and 4 June. Our consular teams in India continue to work around the clock to provide support, advice and information to British travellers remaining in Punjab. Any British travellers who require consular assistance should contact us on consular lines or visit the 'staying in India' page of our travel advice.

■ Iraq: Capital Punishment

Stephen Doughty:

[76716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations (a) he has and (b) officials of his Department have made to the Government of Iraq on abolishing the death penalty in that country in the last 12 months.

James Cleverly:

It remains a long-standing policy of the United Kingdom to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. The Government of Iraq is well aware of our position on this issue, which officials have regularly reiterated in the past 12 months, both in direct discussions and in multilateral fora such as the UN Human Rights Council.

■ Middle East: International Assistance

Steve McCabe:

[78492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to allocate funding to the People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund upon its creation.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We welcome efforts towards peace. We also support the growth of civil society in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and efforts to improve the Palestinian economy. We will continue to monitor the People-to-People Partnership for Peace Fund as it progresses through the US legislative system.

■ Nigeria: Christianity

Carla Lockhart:

[77849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps the Government is taking to help protect Christians in Nigeria following the death of nine Christians in an attack by Fulani Militants in March 2020.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government condemns all incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria; these incidents have had devastating effects on communities of all faiths, including Christians. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all.

In February, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Wilton Park co-hosted a conference on 'Fostering Social Cohesion in Nigeria', exploring the complex causes of conflict and possible solutions to help ease tensions and reduce violence. A report has issued with recommendations, link here: <https://tinyurl.com/y38l9xrc>.

In June, I discussed intercommunal violence in Nigeria with President Buhari's Chief of Staff. The British High Commissioner and her team are increasing their diplomatic engagement with states affected by intercommunal violence and met with NGOs

working on reconciliation to discuss the situation and the efforts they are taking to address it.

The UK Government will continue to work with Nigeria to address the drivers of intercommunal violence in many states and find solutions that meet the needs of all communities.

John Penrose:

[78595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment has he made of the (a) extent of and (b) trends in the level of incidences of persecution and human rights abuses against Christians in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

We are concerned by increasing insecurity in Nigeria. While communities of different religions live together peacefully across much of Nigeria, incidents of intercommunal violence occur across many states in the country. These continue to negatively impact on the human rights of communities of all faiths, including Christians. Religious identity is a factor in many incidents of intercommunal violence but the root causes are more complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality.

In North East Nigeria, attacks by terrorist groups including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa over the past decade have had a devastating effect on communities of all faiths. These groups attack indiscriminately those who do not subscribe to their extremist views, abusing both international human rights and international humanitarian law including the rights to life, freedom of religion or belief, freedom from slavery and right for children not to be used in armed conflict. Although 2014 saw the greatest number of attacks on civilians, terrorist attacks continue to occur on a regular basis in the North East. While Christians have been targeted by the terrorist groups, the majority of people killed have been Muslim. We condemn all terrorist attacks and are providing a comprehensive package of security, humanitarian and stabilisation support to Nigeria to help tackle the terrorist threat.

In January, the Prime Minister discussed insecurity in Nigeria and UK support with President Buhari. Most recently, I raised concerns over intercommunal violence in Nigeria with President Buhari's Chief of Staff in June. We encourage the Government of Nigeria to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of conflict, and for those responsible for human rights violations or abuses to be held to account. We will continue to make clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including all ethnic and religious groups, and human rights for all Nigerians.

John Penrose:

[78596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential identities of the perpetrators of incidences of persecution and human rights abuses against Christians in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

In North East Nigeria, attacks by terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, have had devastating effects on communities of all faiths, including Christians. These groups seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion by attacking indiscriminately those who do not subscribe to their extremist views. I have made clear to Parliament that the UK Government condemns all attacks made by these groups.

In many states in Nigeria, incidents of intercommunal violence have occurred between communities of different faiths and ethnicities. Reprisal attacks by affected communities have also occurred. Religious identity is a factor in this, but the drivers of intercommunal conflict are complex and include competition over natural resources and criminality. We are working with the Nigerian Government to respond to the challenge of resource competition. We have provided technical support to the Nigerian Government for the development of the National Livestock Transformation Plan. The plan aims to promote cattle-rearing in one place, rather than the traditional nomadic practice, to limit competition over land and resources leading to violence.

It is vital that those responsible for attacks in Nigeria are held to account. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians, including ethnic and religious minorities, and human rights for all.

John Penrose:[\[78597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the extent to which Nigerian national or state Government officials have been involved in either preventing or allowing incidences of persecution and human rights abuses to take place against Christians in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is firmly committed to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities at the highest levels the importance of protecting civilians, including all ethnic and religious groups, and human rights for all Nigerians.

We are aware of allegations of Nigerian military or government complicity in attacks on communities of all faiths in Nigeria. However, we do not assess that there is systemic complicity by the Nigerian authorities in the persecution of any peoples in Nigeria. The Nigerian Armed Forces are deployed in North East Nigeria to tackle the threat from terrorist groups including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, who continue to cause immense suffering on communities of all faiths. Through our engagement and programmatic activity in Nigeria, the UK Government is supporting efforts to bring about the long-term changes needed to improve human rights compliance. For example, UK capacity building training for the Nigerian Armed Forces specifically includes topics on human rights compliance and rules of engagement.

In January, the Prime Minister discussed insecurity in Nigeria with President Buhari. In June, I raised security concerns in Nigeria with President Buhari's Chief of Staff.

We will continue to monitor levels of violence in Nigeria, and to push for allegations of human rights abuses to be investigated and for those responsible to be held to account.

John Penrose:

[\[78598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of applying sanctions to those responsible for committing or allowing incidences of persecution and human rights abuses against Christians in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

In North East Nigeria, terrorist groups including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa have targeted both Christian and Muslim communities. Despite appalling attacks on Christians, the majority of those killed have been Muslim. Additionally, in many states across Nigeria incidents of intercommunal violence have affected Christian and Muslim communities. While religion is a factor in some incidents of intercommunal violence in Nigeria, the root causes are more complex and frequently relate to competition over resources and criminality.

We continue to call on the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to protect all communities affected by violence in Nigeria and carry out full investigations to bring perpetrators to justice.

On 6 July, the UK Government established the Global Human Rights sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. This sanctions regime gives the Government a powerful new tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses, including those who target individuals on the grounds of their religion or belief. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

■ Occupied Territories: Coronavirus

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[78728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities on the demolition of a covid-19 testing centre in Hebron; and what steps he is taking to support the Occupied Palestinian Territories in managing the covid-19 pandemic.

James Cleverly:

We are concerned by the reports of a recent demolition of a COVID-19 testing centre in Hebron. We have not to date made representations on this particular case but have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our view that demolitions, in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK is providing vital support to help respond to COVID-19 in the OPTs. Our \$1 million funding contribution will enable the World Health Organization and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care

patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity.

■ **Riot Control Weapons: Chile**

Owen Thompson:

[\[78733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which non-governmental organisations his Department has worked with in order to determine whether the granting of crowd control equipment and ammunition to Chile would result in those exports being used for internal repression per the Consolidated Criteria.

Wendy Morton:

HMG takes its export control responsibilities seriously and continue to monitor developments in Chile closely. We examine every application on a case-by-case basis against strict Criteria, drawing on a range of sources in making assessments, including a range of NGOs and international organisations in addition to our diplomatic posts. All licences are kept under careful and continual review particularly in the light of changed circumstances or new information.

■ **Russia: Coal**

Esther McVey:

[\[77596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will include imports of coal from Russia in the list of sanctions against that country; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to playing a leading role in sanctions against Russia. Sanctions are one of a range of measures we have taken, in concert with others, to defend our security and enhance our capabilities against Russian malign activity. During the transition period, EU sanctions on Russia will continue to apply in the UK. These measures do not currently include sanctions on the import of coal.

Philip Davies:

[\[78590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will include imports of coal from Russia in the list of sanctions against that country; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to playing a leading role in sanctions against Russia. Sanctions are one of a range of measures we have taken, in concert with others, to defend our security and enhance our capabilities against Russian malign activity. During the transition period, EU sanctions on Russia will continue to apply in the UK. These measures do not currently include sanctions on the import of coal.

■ Sanctions

Owen Thompson:

[\[77698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he uses the principle of command responsibility when making decisions on whether to introduce sanctions on foreign nationals.

Nigel Adams:

The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 (the Sanctions Act) provides the legal framework for the UK to impose sanctions autonomously. The Foreign Secretary can designate a person under a particular sanctions regime when he/she has reasonable grounds to suspect the person meets the listing criteria for that particular sanctions regime and considers that it is appropriate to designate that person.

■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Stephen Doughty:

[\[76715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations (a) he has and (b) officials of his Department have made to the Government of Saudi Arabia on abolishing the death penalty in that country in the last 12 months.

James Cleverly:

The UK strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. This is especially the case for juveniles and for crimes other than the most serious. This is in line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights. We regularly raise our concerns about use of the death penalty with the Saudi Arabian authorities. We utilise a range of Ministerial and diplomatic channels, including our Ambassador and British Embassy officials in Riyadh. I raised the death penalty with Dr Awwad al Awwad, President of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission during my virtual visit in July. The Minister for human rights, Lord Ahmad, raised the death penalty in a call with Dr Awwad in June and raised a range of human rights concerns during his visit last September. The Foreign Secretary raised human rights during his visit in March this year. In February, the Saudi Deputy Justice Minister, HE Abdullah Al Sulaimi, visited the UK. My predecessor raised the death penalty with him, as did our officials. The UK Ambassador to Saudi Arabia raised the death penalty with Dr Awwad al Awwad in February.

■ Yemen: Coronavirus

Gill Furniss:

[\[77739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of risk to Yemen of the covid-19 pandemic.

James Cleverly:

Modelling funded by the Department for International Development predicts that Yemen could suffer up to 85,000 COVID-19 deaths in a worst case scenario. In response, the UK is disbursing its £160 million commitment to Yemen promptly this financial year to help the UN to tackle the spread of COVID-19. We expect our funding to provide over 700,000 medical consultations for a range of health conditions, train 1,500 healthcare workers to work safely in a COVID-19 environment and provide a much-needed boost to nearly 600 health centres to continue providing existing health services.

■ Yemen: Military Intervention**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[78682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the trends in the level of international humanitarian law breaches committed as a result of shelling in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK takes alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and human rights law extremely seriously. Whenever the UK receives reports of alleged violations of IHL, we routinely seek information from all credible sources, including from non-governmental and international organisations.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Abortion****Carla Lockhart:**[\[78913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to review the effectiveness of the temporary approval of home use for both stages of early medical abortion.

Helen Whately:

The Department is carefully monitoring the impact of and compliance with the temporary approval of home administration of both sets of abortion medication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials have regular meetings with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Care Quality Commission and abortion service providers.

The Government has committed to undertake a public consultation on making permanent the COVID-19 measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. The current COVID-19 measure will be kept in place until the public consultation concludes and a decision has been made.

■ Antidepressants: Children**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[78479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been prescribed anti-depressants (a) since 1 January 2020 and (b) in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Business Services Authority have announced the publication of experimental statistics on Medicines Used in Mental Health. These will include the number of children, aged 17 years or younger, that have been prescribed anti-depressants in each financial year from 2015/16 to 2019/20 and up to Q1 of 2020/21. The provisional release date for these statistics is 10 September.

■ Arthritis: Health Services**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[78522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that plans to support the recovery of the NHS after the covid-19 outbreak include service provision for people with arthritis.

Edward Argar:

Guidance has been issued to local National Health Service providers and commissioning trusts on the restart of non-COVID-19 services, including arthritis, starting with the most clinically urgent cases and ensuring this is done safely with appropriate infection control. The approach is being flexed at local level according to capacity and demand in different parts of the country, but the reset will be gradual.

■ Autism**Dame Cheryl Gillan:** [\[76552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to have an independent review of the definition of autism as a mental disorder under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We recognise the significance and importance of this issue. We are committed to improving the treatment of people with learning disabilities and/ or autism in law. We will comment on this in our Mental Health Act White Paper, which will be published as soon as it is possible to do so.

■ Breast Milk: Donors**Alison Thewliss:** [\[78725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support he is providing to human milk bank services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for St Albans (Daisy Cooper MP) on 13 May 2020 to Question [37944](#).

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Peter Kyle:**[\[905253\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the causal factors for the mortality rate in the care home population during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Care homes were hard hit by COVID-19 despite all the efforts of Government, local authorities and care homes themselves.

Our understanding of this cruel disease has informed all the steps taken to protect residents.

And there is ongoing work by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies care home working group to improve our understanding which will in turn inform our actions.

■ Care Homes: Protective Clothing**Sir Charles Walker:**[\[78542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to enable care homes to access supplies of centrally purchased personal protective equipment; and if he will make statement.

Nadia Whittome:[\[78943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of personal protective equipment for care workers.

Jo Churchill:

We are doing everything we can to ensure the social care sector has the support it needs during this unprecedented global outbreak. To date, we have released over 172 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) to designated wholesalers for onward sale to social care providers. As a result, the majority of PPE continues to be sourced by care providers themselves from wholesalers, as it was prior to COVID-19.

■ Care Homes: Visits**Sir Alan Campbell:**[\[78526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will clarify guidance on permitted social interactions for those currently in residential care units with their immediate family members.

Helen Whately:

On 22 July 2020 the Government published updated guidance on visiting arrangements for care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus>

Our priority has been to enable residents to be reunited safely with their loved ones. This guidance will be updated as the risk posed by COVID-19 continues to change.

Richard Fuller:**[78605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to allow family members to visit relatives in residential care homes; on what date will those visits be allowed to resume; and if he will publish updated guidance to support those visits.

Helen Whately:

On 22 July 2020 the Government published updated guidance on visiting arrangements for care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus>

Our priority has been to enable residents to be reunited safely with their loved ones. This guidance will be updated as the risk posed by COVID-19 continues to change.

■ Contact Tracing: Computer Software**Chi Onwurah:****[76695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the developers of the Zoe covid-19 symptom tracking application on (a) testing of people reporting symptoms and (b) ensuring the data collected by that application is (i) used with consent of people taking part and (ii) remains in the remit of the Information Commissioner's Office.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Project OASIS was established to cohere data from symptom tracking applications and is currently receiving the data from the Zoe COVID-19 symptom tracking app via the SAIL databank in conjunction with BREATHE. There have been limited conversations with the developers of ZOE linked to project OASIS.

Project OASIS may receive data on testing of people reporting symptoms into the platform. This data would be self-reported and is not official testing data. This does not form part of the dataset that is used by OASIS and OASIS does not have access to individual level testing data. OASIS only uses the fields that are necessary for its purpose, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. The arrangement is governed by a Data Sharing Agreement and the privacy notice of the app was reviewed to ensure that the intended use of the data fits within that which individuals consented to.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[77606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the delivery of the NHS covid-19 Test and Trace app; and what comparative assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the NHS and German test and trace apps.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Isle of Wight phase of the app, which completed in June, has provided valuable information that we will now take forward as we develop an app which supports the entire NHS Test and Trace service.

We have actively engaged with other countries since March 2020 when we started work to develop an app. We are sharing learning and best practice through regular engagement with international partners, including Germany.

Martyn Day:

[\[77700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason health passports have been excluded from the NHSX track and trace mobile app.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Isle of Wight phase of the app, which completed in June, has provided valuable information that we will now take forward as we develop an app which supports the entire NHS Test and Trace service. We will only release it nationally when we are confident we have it right.

Helen Hayes:

[\[77728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 64266 on Contact Tracing: Computer Software, which companies have been subcontracted by Serco to deliver contact tracing services; what the (a) value and (b) staffing levels is of each of those contracts; and how many people have been referred under each of those contracts to date.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Serco have worked with the Cabinet Office and the Department to engage a spread of regional and national providers, including small and medium sized enterprises, who have been integrated, trained and supported by Serco to meet the Department's required delivery model. Serco consider the staffing allocations and values of each sub-contract to be commercial in confidence. Contract management is in process across the contact tracing service, which will start to provide data around referrals.

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[78547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that powers in Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 will not be used to coerce people to comply with the voluntary Test and Trace scheme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We launched the NHS Test and Trace service on 28 May 2020.

We are confident that members of the public will want to play their part in reducing the spread of the virus to keep themselves, their families and communities safe and to protect the National Health Service. This means cooperating with instructions to self-isolate. However, if we find that people are not complying with isolation instructions, we will not hesitate to introduce tougher measures.

The powers in Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 are not designed to be used on a large scale and cannot feasibly be used to enforce compliance with this service. We anticipate that the powers in Schedule 21 will only be used in support of the Government's COVID-19 response in exceptional individual circumstances and will be based on an assessment carried out by a Public Health Officer.

Data about the use of powers under Schedule 21 is published every two months and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-act-report-july-2020>

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Alex Norris:

[76864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information he holds on the number of people employed by (a) the NHS, (b) police forces, (c) fire brigades and (d) (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools who have been required to shield from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

This information requested is not collected centrally as part of the shielding patients list.

Martyn Day:

[77699]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with which (a) companies and (b) organisations Ministers of his Department have held discussions on health passports and their use in the Government's covid-19 strategy.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A number of technology companies and other organisations have approached the Department regarding certification schemes or 'health passports'. These include Mischon De Reya, Yoti, IBM and Google Venture.

In our response to any proposals, the Department has made clear that before considering whether certification linked to a test result (antibody or virus test) could ever be used to lessen or exempt individuals from specific measures, we need to be confident in our understanding of how the immune system responds to infection with the COVID-19 virus and how long that response lasts.

We need to be sure of what the science will allow us to do and what the policy on certification should be based on that evidence, before considering what technology could underpin any scheme.

Martyn Day:

[\[77701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has incorporated health passports into its contingency planning for a second wave of covid-19 infections.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We first need to improve our understanding of the science around immunity in order to fully understand the potential of health passports or certification in our response to this pandemic.

In order to gain answers to critical questions regarding the strength and duration of any immunity following recovery from COVID-19, the United Kingdom Government is conducting some of the biggest studies in the world. This includes using lab-based tests to monitor the number of people that are presenting an antibody response and how this response changes over time.

The response to COVID-19 continues to be guided by the science.

Marion Fellows:

[\[905279\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help prevent a second wave of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government's strategy, based at all times on scientific advice, has been to stay alert, control the virus, save lives, and avoid or minimise a second wave.

Our strategies around controlled relaxations of national measures, local lockdowns and test and trace are all designed to manage that risk.

■ **Coronavirus: Newcastle Upon Tyne**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[77604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 20 July 2020, Official Report, column 1866, on the Coronavirus Response, how much funding from the public purse has been allocated to the Director of Public Health in Newcastle to respond to the covid-19 outbreak; and what the criteria would be for further such funding to be allocated to that Director.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A support grant of £2,185,756 was allocated to Newcastle City Council to develop and implement Outbreak Control Plans to mitigate against and manage local outbreaks of COVID-19. This was allocated on the basis of the public health grant allocation.

The Government has also provided £4.3 billion of additional funding for local government to help them respond to COVID-19 pressures across the services they deliver.

We will continue to monitor pressures in local government and will keep the position under review.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

John McNally: [77684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to onshore personal protective equipment manufacturing.

Jo Churchill:

Lord Deighton is leading the Government effort to unleash the potential of British industry to manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE) for the health and social care sectors. This will maximise opportunities for United Kingdom-based companies to fulfil orders of PPE.

We are building up UK manufacturing with signed contracts to manufacture over three billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons.

It is anticipated that around 20% of all PPE will be manufactured in the UK by the end of the year.

Robert Halfon: [78625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will provide guidance on the use of face masks for people with asthma.

Jo Churchill:

The Government announced that from Friday 24 July, members of the public must wear a face covering when visiting a shop or supermarket in England. Guidance on how to wear and remove a face covering was published online at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

People do not have to wear a face covering if they have a legitimate reason not to. Those with disabilities or health conditions including breathing difficulties or other respiratory conditions are exempt from wearing a face covering, regardless of the venue. The list of exemptions is not exhaustive and would extend to someone who has a justifiable reason for not wearing one on the grounds of health or disability.

Messaging around exemptions is included as a key part of Government communications on when and how to wear a face covering. The Government also continues to engage with stakeholders and charities on the issue of exemptions to support these groups.

Harriett Baldwin: [78651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to Question 38910 tabled on 22 April 2020 by the hon. Member for West Worcestershire, on his policy on wearing masks.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to Question [38910](#) on 5 August.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[48467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been tested for covid-19 in each region as at 15 May 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The 'people tested' measure was initially used to count people who had not been previously received a test, deliberately excluding subsequent instances an individual would have been tested if they had been tested once or more previously. It no longer usefully reflects the volume of tests carried out as, for example, a healthcare worker receiving their second, third or fourth test since the start of the pandemic would not be counted as they have been tested once before. Therefore, the people tested figure will be published on a weekly basis within the NHS Test and Trace statistics rather than daily and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/nhs-test-and-trace-statistics-england-weekly-reports>

The Department has also published transparency data for the number of people tested for coronavirus (England): 30 January to 27 May 2020 which is weekly and covers the period before Test and Trace. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-people-tested-for-coronavirus-england-30-january-to-27-may-2020>

Daily data for the period 20 March to 2 July is available for the United Kingdom as daily and cumulative people tested (discontinued measure) as part of the time series of testing statistics. This data is available at the following link:

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

This data is not available to finer resolutions than whole UK or England depending on the publication.

Chi Onwurah:

[76698]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 July 2020 to Question 67635 on Coronavirus: Screening, whether (a) covid-19 and (b) other notifiable diseases require further data protection agreements to include post code notification.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Public Health England (PHE) routinely shares confidential patient information with Directors of Public Health to manage local infectious disease outbreaks. The sharing of record-level positive COVID-19 test results data, including postcodes, with local authorities is being managed by PHE under a data sharing contract to ensure that the data protection risks associated with this large-scale sharing of personal data are being managed appropriately.

Munira Wilson:

[\[78863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, how many times the powers relating to the compulsory extraction of biological samples have been used; and whether that information is collected centrally.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 allows public health officials to require potentially infected persons to attend a screening and assessment centre and/or provide a sample for testing, if it is in the best interests of that person to do so, or to prevent the spread of the disease.

The use of these powers in England is continuously monitored centrally by Public Health England and the Department. Their use by the devolved administrations is a matter for them.

As of 31 July, these powers have been used fewer than five times, and only to require attendance at a test centre. For reasons of patient confidentiality, precise, identifiable details cannot be made public.

Munira Wilson:

[\[78864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how a patient's covid-19 test result is considered with regard to (a) GDPR and (b) data protection legislation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Protecting the privacy of patients' data is a key priority for the Government and NHS Test and Trace, which is committed to the highest ethical and security standards. All data regarding patients' COVID-19 test results are handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and other relevant legislation, and data are used only for the purposes of National Health Service care, management, evaluation and research, as set out in published privacy information for COVID-19 testing.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Apsana Begum:

[\[78871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the Government plans to ensure that a vaccine for covid-19 will be administered equality across the UK.

Jo Churchill:

Health is a devolved matter. The United Kingdom Government will co-ordinate with partners across the devolved administrations to ensure equitable access and successful delivery of vaccines across the UK. This includes considerations of planning and key decisions, which will need to be aligned across the devolved administrations.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a vaccine for covid-19 will be administered to target local areas with a higher incidence of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Whilst there is a desire for as many people in the United Kingdom to be vaccinated as possible, there may need to be an element of prioritisation, based on availability of vaccine supply and evidence on safety and efficacy in different population groups.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation will provide advice to Ministers on clinical prioritisation of any vaccine based on the best available clinical, modelling and epidemiological data. This will depend on the properties of the vaccine, information about those most at need, and the unique medical circumstances of individuals. However, there are no plans at present to target local areas with higher incidence of COVID-19.

Coronavirus: West Midlands**Preet Kaur Gill:****[78813]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people (a) under 50 years old, (b) aged 51 to 65, (c) aged 66 to 75, and (d) aged 76 have (i) tested positive for and (ii) died as a result of covid-19 in (A) Edgbaston constituency, (B) Birmingham City Council area and (C) West Midlands Combined Authority area, by (1) gender, (2) ethnicity, (3) religion, (4) socio-economic group and (5) occupation.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England collects data on people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and those who have died following a positive test at local authority level.

For Birmingham Upper Tier Local Authority, 5,180 people tested positive for COVID-19 and 1,061 people died following a positive test. These data are as reported at 29 July 2020 on GOV.UK Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United Kingdom data dashboard which is available at the following link:

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

Data are not available in the format requested for the West Midlands Combined Authority area or Edgbaston constituency. Data are also not available in the format requested for breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic group or occupation for any of the areas requested.

Cystic Fibrosis: Medical Treatments**Mr Barry Sheerman:****[77521]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the NICE appraisal of (a) ivacaftor, (b) tezacaftor and (c) elexacaftor was paused; and what the new timeline is for that appraisal process.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) paused its appraisal of ivacaftor, tezacaftor and elexacaftor (marketed in Europe as Kaftrio) for treating cystic fibrosis in July 2020. This followed an announcement by NHS England and NHS Improvement that National Health Service patients will be among the first in Europe

to benefit from the triple therapy through an interim access deal. The deal will last for four years and allow for further data to be collected to better understand the impact for patients of this treatment.

NICE will work with the manufacturer, Vertex and the NHS on continued data collection to inform a future appraisal. New timelines for an appraisal will be confirmed in due course.

■ Dental Health: Children

Alex Norris:

[\[76862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of school closures as a result of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of dental decay among children.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made of the effect of school closures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak on levels of dental decay among children. School and nursery based oral health improvement programmes stopped with school closures. Public Health England is working with the Department for Education and partners, on restarting these programmes safely in the autumn term.

■ Dental Services: Birmingham

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[78817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people requiring dental work who have been unable to secure appointments in each of the last six months in Birmingham.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not held.

■ Dental Services: Children

Alex Norris:

[\[76863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of children whose planned dental GA admission to hospital was (a) suspended and (b) cancelled during the covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Jo Churchill:

No such estimate has been made. Guidance was issued on 17 March to National Health Service trusts asking them to postpone non-urgent related elective operations in order to prepare the system to respond to COVID-19 pressures.

■ Dental Services: Finance

Alex Norris:

[76860]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the proposed deductions to be applied to NHSE payments to dental providers for (a) April, (b) May and (c) until 8 June 2020.

Alex Norris:

[76861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason NHS England made the decision to impose retrospective deductions to payments for Local Urgent Dental Care sites.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England published a letter on 13 July, setting out that a deduction of 16.75% will be applied to National Health Service dental practices (those that were not operating as urgent dental centre sites) for the period 1 April to 7 June, to take account of lower consumables (laboratory and material) and other variable practice costs during the period. Local urgent dental care centres will not have any deductions applied for the period they have been operational. A copy of the letter can be found at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0603-Dental-preparedness-letter_July-2020.pdf

■ Dental Services: Protective Clothing

Charlotte Nichols:

[78892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase funding to dental practices for the purchase of personal protective equipment.

Jo Churchill:

Dentists contract with NHS England and NHS Improvement to deliver a given annual level of service in return for an agreed contract value. NHS England and NHS Improvement made an early decision in late March to continue funding National Health Service dental contracts to support dental practices despite all routine dentistry being suspended. During the restart period which began on 8 June NHS England and NHS Improvement funding for NHS dental contracts continues and activity requirements continue to be reviewed in consultation with the profession. Dental practices are therefore able to gradually restart while still receiving their full NHS funding.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Coronavirus

Jon Trickett:

[77513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when covid-19 risk assessments were undertaken for his Department's offices in (a) Victoria Street and (b) Quarry House; who carried out those risk assessments; what proportion of staff will be able to return to work in those offices; what reduction in workplace capacity those risk

assessments identified; how decisions on which staff will be required return to his Department's offices are made; and if he will place a copy of those risk assessments in the Library.

Edward Argar:

A COVID-19 risk assessment was carried out for the whole of the Departmental estate, including 39 Victoria Street and Quarry House, and the assessment was published to staff on 10 June 2020.

The risk assessment was carried out by the Deputy Director for Property and Smarter Working and signed off by the Department's Executive Committee.

The COVID-safe capacity at 39 Victoria Street is 380 and at Quarry House it is 300. That represents approximately a 60% reduction in workplace capacity.

The Department worked with directors to identify individuals who needed to return to the office. These staff members have had discussions with line managers and been provided with access to a desk booking system as well as updates on the COVID-safety measures within Departmental buildings.

Jon Trickett:

[\[77514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what consultation he has had with staff of his Department's offices in (a) Victoria Street and (b) Quarry House on preferences for returning to the office as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Edward Argar:

Consultation has taken place with all Departmental staff, including surveys, polls and interactive team discussions.

Jon Trickett:

[\[77515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when staff of his Department will be required to return to the office as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Edward Argar:

39 Victoria Street and Quarry House have remained open throughout the pandemic. Provisions are already in place to safely support staff who do need to work in these offices for business or wellbeing reasons.

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

Neil O'Brien:

[\[77792\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many staff in his Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows how many staff at the Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in the last five years.

REPORTING YEAR	1 APRIL 2018 TO 31 MARCH 2019	1 APRIL 2019 - 31 MARCH 2020	1 APRIL 2020 - 24 JULY 2020
Number of staff who have undertaken training	340	505*	130**

Notes:

1. Data is held on the Civil Service Learning platform.
2. Data is not held for the years prior to 1 April 2018.
3. Figures are completion rates, however:

*figure includes 84 starts of unconscious bias training that is started, but not completed

**figure includes 24 starts of unconscious bias training that is started, but not completed

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Harriett Baldwin:

[\[78652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to Question 63335 tabled on 23 June 2020 by the hon. Member for West Worcestershire, on his plans to use the independent health sector.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 28 July to Question [63335](#).

■ Exercise

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[77528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to encourage local authorities to use Versus Arthritis' physical activity toolkit as part of their local recovery planning.

Helen Whately:

The Department is aware that Versus Arthritis has produced a range of guidance for commissioners, clinicians, patients and the public to improve musculoskeletal health.

Commissioners draw on a range of evidence and guidance when planning and delivering for local populations, such as that produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, and guidance produced by charities such as Versus Arthritis.

■ Gender Recognition

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many individuals have requested to detransition following gender transition in the most recent period for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service does not, nor does it plan to, routinely collect data on the number of people who sought medical intervention to reverse or undo a previous medical intervention for the alleviation of gender dysphoria.

■ Gender Recognition: Coronavirus

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[70535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the length of waiting lists for adult gender identity services; and what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times on those lists to align with the statutory 18-week limit.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 13 July 2020]: As with all NHS services during the COVID-19 pandemic, gender dysphoria clinics experienced a disruption to their services. However, the clinics did not close and offered remote appointments and electronic repeat prescriptions where appropriate.

To address the continuing increase in the number of people seeking care from gender dysphoria clinics, NHS England ran a number of contract award processes, in 2019, with the aim of increasing clinical capacity and reducing waiting times. As a result, three new adult gender dysphoria services will begin to see patients in 2020/21 as pilots for evaluation.

The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust was selected to run a new gender dysphoria service as a pilot in London and the first patients were seen in July 2020. The MerseyCare NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded a contract to deliver a similar pilot service in Cheshire and Merseyside, and a contract award is imminent for a provider to deliver a similar pilot service in Greater Manchester.

■ Gender Recognition: Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of closing the Gender-identity Development Service at the Tavistock Centre.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has no plans to change the current health care treatment available to people under 18 displaying gender dysphoria. This includes the services provided by Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust.

■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon:

[\[78624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when GP surgeries will move from total triage to regular service as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

The way in which people access general practice services changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Practices are offering more triage and remote consultations by telephone and online, in the first instance, in order to see as many patients as possible while protecting staff and patients from avoidable risk of infection.

The total triage model enables general practitioner practices to ensure that every patient receives care from the right person or service at the right time. It does not restrict the type of appointment practices can offer.

On 31 July NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance on moving to Phase 3 in the response to COVID-19. Guidance made clear that practices must continue to offer face-to-face appointments at their surgeries as well as continuing to use remote triage and video, online and telephone consultation wherever appropriate – whilst also considering those who are unable to access or engage with digital services.

■ Health and Social Service: Protective Clothing

Munira Wilson:

[\[78868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the NHS and social care sector have adequate stock levels of scrubs during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Supply Chain, the main provider of consumables and equipment into the National Health Service, report that their suppliers have sufficient supplies of scrubs for NHS customers to order. Care homes access scrubs from their business as usual wholesalers and we have set up a number of new access points and distribution routes whereby all items of personal protective equipment, including gowns and aprons, can be ordered.

■ Health Services: Devolution

Jon Trickett:

[\[76593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on and (b) assessment he has made of the potential merits of devolving health responsibilities to city-region areas in England.

Edward Argar:

Whilst we do not have a record of any specific discussions, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly discusses a range of issues with Cabinet colleagues.

The Government is committed to local devolution, including in city regions, and is open to new proposals. The Prime Minister has personally championed devolution and has previously set out this Government's commitment to supporting growth up and down the country.

The Department of Health and Social Care and other national partners, including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and HM Treasury, are in contact with mayors and officials in combined authorities, such as Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Liverpool City Region and Cambridge and Peterborough around their plans for health and care integration, innovation, and addressing the wider determinants of health.

■ Health Services: Domestic Violence

Jess Phillips:

[\[77657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to ensure that the Statutory Guidance to the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 includes best practice on interventions in health to ensure that they are implemented consistently throughout (a) care commissioning group and (b) NHS trust areas.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly speaks to Cabinet colleagues.

As set out in the NHS Constitution for England, the National Health Service aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism, with the patient at the heart of everything the NHS does.

Best practice is already shared in a number of ways, including through events, guidance and resources such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence quality standards. Accountability and regulatory structures are also in place to ensure commissioned health services meet high standards of quality and safety.

In this case, the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner will help drive further consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas and agencies.

Jess Phillips:

[\[77658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure the adequacy of funding for (a) best practice and (b) evidence-based interventions throughout the health service for victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly speaks to Cabinet colleagues. Funding is agreed with HM Treasury and funding beyond 2020/21 will be addressed through the next Spending Review due later this year.

Taking a multi-agency approach is important to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse. The Ministry of Justice will be developing a cross-Government victim funding strategy to ensure a strategic and joined-up approach to funding at both national and local level to maximise the impact of support we provide to victims and witnesses.

The Department will continue working with our partners to share best practice. The Pathfinder project developed a toolkit which is available for free online and aims to support development of a model health response to domestic abuse.

Jess Phillips:[\[77659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure the adequacy of funding for the effective provision of (a) services and (b) referrals in relation to incidences of violence against women and girls.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service will see its day-to-day spending rise by £33.9 billion in cash terms by 2023-24, compared with 2018-2019, and the public health grant saw a real term increase to £3.279 billion in 2020/21. Responsibility for local decisions on funding services rest with the local areas to meet the needs of their population.

There are a wide range of healthcare services that victims and survivors of violence against women and girls may access. This includes sexual assault referral centres and female genital mutilation support clinics. The 47 sexual assault referral centres received £35 million in 2019/20, rising from £27 million in 2017/18.

We will continue to work across Government and agencies to ensure the effective provision of services to support victims and survivors and support multi-agency working and referrals.

■ Health Services: Internet**Nadia Whittome:**[\[78936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of interpreters for remote medical consultations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department is aware of the complexities of interpreting for remote medical consultations, including the need for interpreter services to adapt their processes to align with this new type of video consultation. We are developing our support offer to help trusts engage with the widest possible audience of patients, through initiatives like sound-only access to the call for interpreters. We will continue to support and share innovative practices in interpreter services as part of this effort.

■ Health Services: Repairs and Maintenance

Seema Malhotra:

[\[77629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to support the re-development of primary care facilities that are no longer fit for purpose.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service is currently supporting developments and improvements through the Estates and Technology Transformation Fund (ETTF) and an Improvement Grant budget within primary care estates. The ETTF aims to accelerate changes in general practice infrastructure to enable improvement in access and service quality. The ETTF is investing £800 million in both capital and revenue between 2016 and 2021. This is in addition to annual investment in general practice IT (Information Technology) and 'business as usual' capital.

The NHS Long Term Plan outlines a prominent role for primary care networks for delivering the shift of activity from the acute sector to an in-community care environment. The Health Infrastructure Plan, published September 2019, recognises that community care and primary care is critical to the delivery of personalised and preventative health. Future NHS capital funding, including for primary care, will be provided as part of the Department's multi-year capital settlement at the Spending Review which will conclude in autumn 2020.

■ Health: Equality

Chi Onwurah:

[\[76696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions his Department has had with the British Medical Association North East Regional Council on tackling health inequalities.

Jo Churchill:

We have had no recent discussions with the British Medical Association North East Regional Council on tackling health inequalities.

We remain committed to levelling up, including health outcomes, and we are committed to spreading opportunity across this country.

■ Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[77489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support the hearing impaired community whose ability to communicate may be affected by the introduction of mandatory face masks in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has announced that from Friday 24 July, members of the public must wear a face covering when visiting a shop or supermarket in England. Guidance on how to wear and remove a face covering was published online on 14 July. In

addition, the Government is running a major proactive communications campaign on face coverings to alert the public where they are now required to wear face coverings and educate the public on how to correctly wear one.

Legitimate reasons for not wearing a mask include if they are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate or if they are not able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability. People will be able to remove their face covering if speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions or clear sound to communicate.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Neil Coyle: [\[76742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have participated in the PrEP trials in the UK since they have become available.

Neil Coyle: [\[76743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many PrEP impact trial places have been made available since the start of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Neil Coyle: [\[76744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether covid-19 lockdown restrictions have affected the ability of people to participate in PrEP impact trials.

Neil Coyle: [\[76745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department is measuring the efficacy of PrEP impact trials during the covid-19 lockdown.

Jo Churchill:

In total 22,525 people were enrolled on the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Impact Trial to June 2020.

Recruitment to the trial slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the Government's advice for people to socially distance and stay at home. Arrangements were put in place during this period to enable those enrolled on the trial to access longer drug prescriptions and to order sexually transmitted infection tests online to reduce the need for face to face appointments.

The Trial is monitored by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). In addition, the PrEP Programme Oversight Board, which includes representatives from the Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement, Public Health England, the NIHR, the trial team and the community, has continued to meet virtually during the pandemic to provide support to the ongoing operation of the trial.

Hospitals: Coronavirus

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [59228]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much each of the NHS Nightingale hospitals cost to construct; and what estimate he has made of the running costs of each of those hospitals.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [59480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of the contractors involved in building each NHS Nightingale hospital; and how much each contractor was awarded for that construction work.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [59481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which contractors participated in building each (a) Nightingale and (b) field hospital; and how much funding each contractor was awarded for that work.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 18 June 2020]: Current estimates provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement to the Department indicate that the total set up costs for all seven Nightingale hospital sites equates to approximately £220 million.

Contracts in the form of licences to occupy have been entered into for the Nightingale hospital sites by the National Health Service. However, disclosure of these contracts is likely to harm the legitimate commercial interests of the site owners. Information contained in the contracts has been provided in confidence and in circumstances where disclosure would amount to an actionable breach of confidence. These contracts will not be published.

Each Nightingale hospital has a host trust to provide healthcare services. Host trusts put in place contracts for necessary works/facilities and management matters and contract award notices should be published in accordance with applicable requirements.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [76723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer received on 5 June 2020 to Question 52035 on Hospitals: Coronavirus, of the total number of covid-19 deaths in each NHS Trust containing a Nightingale Hospital, how many of those deaths occurred within the Nightingale Hospital.

Edward Argar:

The data provided in response to the previous question indicated all recorded deaths within Nightingale hospitals as at 3 June 2020.

Data on COVID-19 deaths is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-daily-deaths/>

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Derek Twigg:

[77523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 64074, how many adult flu vaccines (a) were ordered in 2019 and (b) have been ordered for winter 2020.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioners and community pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults.

In 2019/20, around 400,000 doses of adult flu vaccine were procured as a contingency stock. We have ordered additional stock for the 2020/21 season, and information on this will be provided once all the contracts are completed.

Rosie Cooper:

[78580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to launch the national public information campaign on the 2020-21 flu vaccine programme.

Jo Churchill:

The 2020/21 flu vaccination programme will be supported with a new marketing campaign to encourage take up amongst eligible groups for the free flu vaccine, due to launch in autumn 2020. Resources for the campaign will be available to download and order from the Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/>

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Neil Coyle:

[68350]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £300 million provided to help local authorities deal with local lockdowns has been allocated; and which local authorities have received that funding.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 July 2020]: The entirety of the £300 million has been allocated to local authorities in England. Allocations for the grant are shown in the attached table.

Attachments:

1. Table [Copy of PQ68350 300M test and trace LAs breakdown.xlsx]

■ Medical Records: Data Protection

Chi Onwurah:

[77605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contributions of 20 July 2020, Official Report 1863 and 1865, what steps he is taking to ensure consistent prioritisation of data protection requirements on personal health data.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[77607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his oral contribution of 20 July 2020, Official Report 1865, on Data Protection Impact Assessments with the provisions of section 251(7) of the NHS Act 2006, under which powers the Control of Patient Information Notices are issued.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Ensuring the privacy of individuals and the security of their personal data is a priority for the Government and National Health Service. We comply with the requirements of data protection legislation, ensuring data is used in a safe, secure and legal way. Personal data is handled according to the highest ethical and security standards.

We are clear that where organisations are using the Control of Patient Information Notices to process confidential patient information under the Health Service Control of Patient Information Regulations 2002 (COPI) for purposes set out in Regulation 3(1) of COPI (insofar as those purposes relate to the current outbreak of COVID-19), that data controllers are still required to comply with relevant and appropriate data protection standards and to ensure that they operate within statutory and regulatory boundaries. Recipients of confidential patient information have responsibilities under COPI when processing the confidential patient information and must observe the restrictions which apply to their processing of it under Regulation 7 of COPI.

In addition, we are completing all necessary Data Protection Impact Assessments in order to meet our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation.

■ **Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[78483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to implement the recommendations of Baroness Cumberlege's Review on the Safety of Certain Medicines and Medical Devices; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Halfon:

[\[78622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to implement the recommendations of the Cumberlege review.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review published its report on 8 July. All the report's recommendations will be considered carefully.

The Government will provide an update in due course.

Jon Trickett:

[\[78516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the recommendations outlined in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

Jon Trickett:

[\[78517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he will take steps to implement the recommendations in the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

Jon Trickett:

[\[78518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will implement the recommendations in Chapter 4 of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review on the use of Sodium Valproate in pregnancy.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review published its report on the 8 July and all of its recommendations will be considered carefully. The Government will provide an update in due course.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is working with stakeholders 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.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[905260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations in the July 2020 Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have welcomed this report and we are considering Baroness Cumberlege's recommendations carefully.

It is important – for the sake of patients and especially those who have suffered greatly – that we give this independent report the full consideration it deserves.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children**

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[78478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been moved out-of-area for inpatient mental health hospital admissions (a) since 1 January 2020 and (b) in each of the last five years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information requested is not available in the format requested.

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[78480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been referred to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services (a) since 1 January 2020 and (b) in each of the last five years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The data is not available in the format requested.

■ **Mental Health Services: Coronavirus**

Munira Wilson:

[\[78866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional mental health support his Department is making available to (a) frontline workers, (b) people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and (c) young people as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have ensured comprehensive packages of emotional and psychological support are available to all social care and National Health Service staff, building on existing support. This includes free access to a confidential helpline operated by Samaritans.

Recent reviews have confirmed the disparity of the impact and risks that COVID-19 has on those from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. We have set out our intention to take forward further work under the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) and through the Prime Minister's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with BAME experts and others to encourage timely access to NHS mental health services and improve BAME people's experience of these services.

NHS children and young people's mental health services have remained open throughout the pandemic and have deployed digital tools to connect with young people and provide ongoing support. We have published guidance to parents and carers on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing on the GOV.UK and Every Mind Matters websites and we have provided additional funding of £5 million for mental health charities to support adults and children, including those from a BAME background, as well as a further £4.2 million, as part of the Government's United Kingdom-wide £750 million package of support for the voluntary sector.

■ **Mental Health Services: Schools**

Paul Blomfield:

[\[905254\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to ensure adequate provision of mental health services in schools when they reopen as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government's £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme will support staff to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling.

We are continuing to establish mental health support teams in schools, including two teams in the Sheffield area.

This complements the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum, which makes mental health a key part of primary- and secondary-school education.

■ Methadone: Prescriptions**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[77561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 71722 on Methadone: Prescriptions, what plans he has to authorise requests from NHS and voluntary sector providers to electronically prescribe FP10 MDA opioid substitution therapy.

Jo Churchill:

There has already been unprecedented growth in the use and availability of electronic prescribing across the system. However, the Government wants to go further and enable as many prescriptions as possible can be sent electronically. The aim to increase the use of electronic prescribing builds on work already ongoing throughout the National Health Service, where more than 6,000 general practitioners are now able to use the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS).

However, significant technological development is required, both centrally and by system vendors, for electronic FP10 MDA prescriptions to be processed legally and safely.

In 2018 NHS Digital undertook a prioritisation exercise to identify future enhancements and improvements to the EPS through to March 2021. This included a review of the use of FP10 MDA prescriptions. This exercise identified several other higher priority EPS related developments at that time.

■ Multiple Sclerosis**Christine Jardine:**[\[77770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department collects on the number of people with Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis.

Christine Jardine:[\[77771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of people with Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis in England receive an annual care review.

Helen Whately:

Figures on the number of people with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS) and the proportion of these people who receive an annual care review, are

not available. However, The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) estimates that SPMS affects around 9,000 people in England.

The NICE guideline 'Multiple sclerosis in adults: management', updated in 2019 sets out best practice on the diagnosis, treatment, care and support of people with SPMS. It contains recommendations for multi-professional care teams, including an annual comprehensive care review for all people with multiple sclerosis. The guidance is available at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg186/resources/multiple-sclerosis-in-adults-management-pdf-35109816059077

■ Multiple Sclerosis: Diagnosis

Christine Jardine:

[78826]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance has been issued for healthcare practitioners to support the accurate diagnosis of people with signs and symptoms of secondary progressive multiple sclerosis.

Helen Whately:

Secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS) is a stage which comes after relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS) for many people with the condition. After a diagnosis of RRMS has been established, clinicians will observe the patient's symptoms over a period of time, in order to determine if they are associated with SPMS. With this type of multiple sclerosis (MS), a person's disability gets steadily worse and they are less likely to have relapses (when symptoms get worse but then get better).

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline 'Multiple sclerosis in adults: management', updated in 2019 sets out best practice on the diagnosis, treatment, care and support of people with MS. The guidance sets out a number of initial presentations that clinicians should be aware of when looking for signs of MS. This is supplemented by the NICE Quality Standard for MS, published in 2016, which describes what high-quality MS care, including diagnosis, looks like.

The NICE guidance is included in the following links:

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg186/resources/multiple-sclerosis-in-adults-management-pdf-35109816059077

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs108

■ Multiple Sclerosis: Health Services

Christine Jardine:

[77772]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits of Integrated Care Systems for people with Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. Integrated care systems enable National Health Service organisations, in partnership with local councils and others, to take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering NHS standards, and improving the health of the population they serve, including people with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis.

Christine Jardine:[\[77773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve health outcomes for people living with Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis.

Helen Whately:

In order to improve the care and outcomes for people with progressive neurological conditions, such as secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS), NHS England and NHS Improvement produced a progressive neurological conditions RightCare toolkit, in collaboration with key stakeholders such as the MS Trust and the MS Society. This toolkit supports systems to understand and deliver the priorities in care for people living with various progressive neurological conditions, in line with best-practice guidelines.

■ NHS: Contracts**Sam Tarry:**[\[69741\]](#)

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

Sam Tarry:[\[69742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total value is of NHS Soft FM contracts for the most recent period in which such information is available.

Edward Argar:

Information is not collected centrally on Soft Facility Management (FM) providers working for the National Health Service.

Data is collected annually through the Estates Return Information Collection on the NHS estate including its facility management services. The reported Soft FM (Hotel services) costs for 2018-19 were £3,156 million.

■ NHS: Coronavirus**Ruth Jones:**[\[905251\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effect on the NHS of the long-term health consequences of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

Leicester Biomedical Research Centre is leading our research into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19. This includes a study of 10,000 patients who were

admitted to hospital with COVID-19, which will give us valuable information about the longer-term effects of the disease and how we can best support recovery.

■ NHS: Ethnic Groups

Sir Edward Davey:

[78481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) nurses and (b) doctors there were in the NHS, by ethnicity, in each of the last five years.

Helen Whately:

NHS Digital publishes bi-annual statistics on diversity and inclusion as part of its NHS Digital Hospital and Community Health Service Workforce Statistics bi-annual publication. The following tables show the number of doctors and nurses and health visitors broken down by ethnicity, as at September each year for the last four years, plus latest data this year, as at March 2020 is the latest available data on ethnicity. Data is provided as at September each year to account for changes in the recruitment cycle.

DOCTORS	SEPTEMBER 2016	SEPTEMBER 2017	SEPTEMBER 2018	SEPTEMBER 2019	MARCH 2020
Asian or Asian British	29,369	30,398	31,565	33,707	34,896
Black or Black British	3,966	4,256	4,664	5,443	5,960
Chinese	2,572	2,684	2,811	2,941	2,946
Mixed	3,056	3,271	3,431	3,733	3,988
White	60,884	61,809	61,281	61,958	62,359
Any Other Ethnic Group	4,054	4,259	4,477	5,029	5,367
Discontinued codes	38	36	35	31	30
Not Stated	6,753	6,931	7,774	8,458	8,746
Unknown	2,552	2,783	2,827	3,085	2,613
Total	113,244	116,427	118,865	124,385	126,905

NURSES AND HEALTH VISITORS	SEPTEMBER 2016	SEPTEMBER 2017	SEPTEMBER 2018	SEPTEMBER 2019	MARCH 2020
Asian or Asian British	25,829	27,054	28,949	32,389	35,709
Black or Black British	23,505	24,175	25,115	26,909	28,632
Chinese	1,197	1,129	1,117	1,110	1,112
Mixed	4,047	4,087	4,302	4,610	4,829
White	242,702	240,616	238,367	238,150	239,540
Any Other Ethnic Group	9,513	10,118	11,110	13,200	14,531
Discontinued codes	191	172	158	122	110
Not Stated	10,993	10,679	10,605	11,200	11,547
Unknown	2,137	1,994	2,644	2,799	3,130
Total	320,114	320,024	322,367	330,489	339,140

■ NHS: Parking

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[78475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much revenue has been collected in fines at NHS facilities as a result of parking infringements in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

The Estates Return Information Collection publishes data annually on income National Health Service trusts receive from car parking split between patients, and visitors and staff. Income from fines as a result of parking infringements is not identified separately.

■ NHS: Procurement

Helen Hayes:

[\[73016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what checks have been carried out on supply chains relating to his Department's covid-19 response in terms of (a) ethical audits, (b) financial due diligence and (c) quality control.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 July 2020]: Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Suppliers are evaluated by Departmental officials on their financial standing, compliance with minimum product specifications and ability to perform the contract. Guidance has been issued which also advises contracting authorities on how to assess suppliers in terms of mitigating the risk of modern slavery.

Contracts are placed in line with Departmental terms and conditions which include clauses requiring Good Industry Practice to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in supply chains; and for contract management to ensure that supplier performance and the delivery of value for money can be properly assessed throughout the lifetime of the contract.

■ NHS: Safety**Joy Morrissey:****[78860]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the GS1 report entitled, A scan of the benefits: the Scan4Safety evidence report, published in July 2020, what recent assessment has been made of the potential merits of providing funding to enable the expansion of Scan4Safety across the acute care sector in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Scan4Safety pilot proved the benefits of the programme for patient safety, clinical productivity and operational efficiency. In February 2019, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care indicated that he wanted to see the programme taken up by the entire acute sector. Following the publication of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety review, and as the health and care system looks to take forward learnings on the back of the response to COVID-19, we are looking at a range of programmes, including Scan4Safety, to build on known successes. In the case of Scan4Safety this will also be considered as part of the response to the forthcoming Medicines and Medical Devices Bill.

■ Obesity**Jim Shannon:****[77621]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle (a) obesity in men and (b) the effect of that condition on (i) bowel cancer, (ii) diabetes, (iii) prostate cancer and (iv) heart disease.

Jo Churchill:

Through our new obesity strategy, published on 27 July, we are doing more than ever to support people living with obesity to lose weight including through the free National Health Service 12-week weight loss plan app for those who want more support. We will also expand weight management services to help more people get the support they need and through incentives with general practitioners will make conversations about weight in primary care the norm.

These measures add to the wide range of actions already in place including the soft drinks industry levy, sugar reduction and wider calorie reformulation programme which will improve our eating habits and reduce the amount of sugar and calories we consume.

'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives

■ Obesity: Devolution**Carla Lockhart:****[77852]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the devolved administrations on tackling obesity; and whether he plans to allocate additional funding to help tackle obesity in the devolved regions.

Jo Churchill:

Officials in the Department have regular discussions with their counterparts in the devolved administrations on improving the health and wellbeing of the nation, including on reducing obesity. Discussions include domestic strategies and the delivery of United Kingdom-wide measures in our obesity strategy, such as front of pack nutrition labelling on food and drink.

There are no plans to change the current funding arrangements.

■ Ophthalmic Services**Alex Norris:****[77784]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2020 to Question 8394 on Ophthalmic Services and with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what the timelines are for the development and publication of the National Ophthalmology Plan.

Jo Churchill:

Further to the answer given on 30 January, NHS England and NHS Improvement's national outpatient transformation programme has already begun, although there will not be a formally published National Ophthalmology Plan.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently developing guidance and support to improve ophthalmology outpatient services and avoid the need for physical

attendances where possible. This includes already appointed dedicated clinical leadership, pathway design and practical resources to be shared with local health systems to both support restoration of ophthalmology outpatient services post-COVID-19 and enable future transformation.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working closely with the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the College of Optometrists and other key stakeholders.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Coronavirus

Alex Norris:

[\[78841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) advice he has received on and (b) assessment he has made of the effect of restrictions resulting from the covid-19 outbreak on clinical outcomes for people in need of regular hospital treatment for eye conditions; and what steps he is taking to restart regular hospital ophthalmology treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Whilst routine hospital treatments were suspended to provide capacity to treat COVID-19 patients, we are now working closely with the National Health Service and other partners to restart these in a safe way. Guidance has been issued to local NHS providers and commissioning trusts on the restart of non-COVID-19 services, starting with the most clinically urgent cases and ensuring this is done safely with appropriate infection control.

The treatment of patients, including ophthalmology, will be based on clinical judgement, with patient and staff safety as the highest priority.

The Government is also providing an additional £3 billion to the NHS, which includes funding for continued access to the independent sector to carry out routine treatments and procedures as well as provide additional capacity for COVID-19 patients if needed.

■ Ophthalmic Services: Transport

Alex Norris:

[\[78839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to allow patient transport services that enable people to attend ophthalmology appointments to resume.

Jo Churchill:

On 27 March the National Health Service released guidance to reflect changes in patient transport services (PTS) during the COVID-19 response. As a result, PTS was redeployed to support critical services and ensure transport was available for those who needed it most.

As hospital services are reintroduced, PTS should be available to support patients to attend their appointments, including ophthalmology patients. We are in the process of replacing the earlier guidance to reflect that the eligibility criteria that was temporarily withdrawn can now be reinstated.

■ Ophthalmology: Charities

Alex Norris:

[78842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £750 million package of support for charities has been allocated to ophthalmology charities.

Alex Norris:

[78843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to allocate funding to ensure that ophthalmology charities can continue to run their services.

Jo Churchill:

We recognise that many charities are facing difficult decisions at the exact time their services are needed most and, on 8 April 2020 the Chancellor announced £750 million to support for the charity sector in response to COVID-19. This includes up to £200 million for hospices and £22 million for health and social care charities. The £22 million includes:

- £4.2 million to support mental health charities and charities within the National Bereavement Alliance;
- Up to £6.8 million to support St John Ambulance;
- £6 million to support Air Ambulances;
- £6 million to support various charities, including those working with people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs, those working to support people with cancer and stroke and dementia charities, and those that support the adult social care system; and
- This funding will also go to charities supporting pregnant women, babies in neonatal intensive care and those affected by stillbirth and neonatal deaths and support for specialist addiction and recovery charities.

To this date there has been no funding agreed for ophthalmology charities.

There is still an opportunity for charities to apply directly for funding from the National Lottery's £200 million Coronavirus Community Support Fund. This fund is supporting charities working with vulnerable people. The criteria for this fund are set out at the following link:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/>

■ Pain: Health Services

Alex Norris:

[77783]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2020 to Question for 67749 on Pain: Health Services, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to the online version of the Escape-pain programme.

Helen Whately:

In the NHS Long Term Plan, published 7 January 2019, NHS England set out the expansion of online access to support for people with musculoskeletal problems. This

included programmes such as a digital version of the well-established face-to-face ESCAPE-pain group programme, which enables self-management and coping with arthritic pain through exercise.

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

www.escape-pain.org/

Outcome data on user engagement the ESCAPE-Pain programme is expected in August, which will enable an assessment of usage.

■ Parkinson's Disease: Health Services

Martin Vickers: [77562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many neurology appointments for people with Parkinson's disease have been delayed or cancelled since January 2020 as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Martin Vickers: [77563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of access to specialised neurology services during the covid-19 outbreak for advanced Parkinson's patients; and what steps he is taking to resume those services.

Martin Vickers: [77564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Parkinson's patients who may have experienced a deterioration in their condition during the covid-19 outbreak; and what guidance he is providing to help identify patients in urgent need.

Helen Whately:

Figures on the number of neurology appointments delayed or cancelled and the number of Parkinson's patients who have experienced a deterioration on their condition are not available, and no specific assessment of the adequacy of access to specialised neurology services during the COVID-19 outbreak for advanced Parkinson's patients has been made.

Early in the pandemic NHS England and NHS Improvement advised in-person consultations "should only take place when absolutely necessary". Providers have been rolling out remote consultations using video, telephone, email and text message services as a priority, including for those with neurological conditions.

To support the delivery of high-quality services for patients with neurological conditions during the pandemic, the Association of British Neurologists (ABN) published a range of guidance in this important area. NHS England and NHS Improvement have also provided advice on prioritisation for community services during the pandemic which set out how to meet the needs of people with neurological

conditions like Parkinson's safely and effectively. The guidance can be found at the following links:

www.theabn.org/page/covid19_response

www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0145-COVID-19-prioritisation-within-community-health-services-1-April-2020.pdf

Furthermore, the ABN has now published specific guidance on recommencing neurology services in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, including those for people suffering with Parkinson's disease. This guidance contains assessments on which services and patients require urgent prioritisation, taking into account the severity and onset of symptoms. This is available at the following link:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.theabn.org/resource/collection/65C334C7-30FA-45DB-93AA-74B3A3A20293/20.05.20_ABN_Restarting_Neurology_Services_post_COVID_v1.pdf

■ Patients: Coronavirus

Barbara Keeley:

[78599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will estimate the number of employed people who were formerly on the Government's Shielded Patient List who are aged (a) 50 to 59, (b) 60 to 69 and (c) more than 70 years.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not available, as data on a person's employment status is not collected centrally for the shielded patients list.

■ Postnatal Depression

Jim Shannon:

[77624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps her Department has taken to (a) prevent and (b) tackle post-natal depression.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We remain committed to improving perinatal mental health services for new mothers and their partners - not only during the current pandemic.

To help prevent post-natal depression, it is important that parents feel fully supported by all those around them who participate in the care of both mother and baby. Health visitors are ideally placed to support families.

Community health services have continued to provide support during the pandemic with greater use of digital and remote technologies providing support and prioritising higher needs families.

Since 1 April 2020 it has been a contractual requirement for general practitioners to offer a maternal postnatal consultation at six to eight weeks after birth which should focus on a review of the mother's physical and mental health and general wellbeing.

■ **Pregnancy: Mortality Rates**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[76776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Maternal, Newborn and Infant Clinical Outcome Review Programme's 2019 publication entitled Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care, on the elevated risk of maternal death for Black and Asian women.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Analysis of maternal deaths, stillbirths and neonatal deaths, undertaken by MBRRACE-UK, shows that poor outcomes are much higher for mothers and babies from Black/Black British and Asian/Asian British ethnic groups and women living in the most deprived areas of the country.

Work to reduce health inequalities around maternal and perinatal mortality rates is being led by Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE, Chief Midwifery Officer. This includes understanding why mortality rates are higher, considering evidence about what will reduce mortality rates and taking action to reduce mortality rates. The work is multi-disciplinary and involves a range of stakeholder groups, including users of maternity services.

■ **Prostate Cancer: Human Papillomavirus**

Jim Shannon:

[\[77619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has held with representatives of the Royal College of Nursing on the potential connection between prostate cancer and HPV infections.

Jo Churchill:

No discussions have taken place.

■ **Rare Diseases: Children**

Dan Carden:

[\[78845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure access to enzyme replacement treatment at a local specialist centre for children with rare diseases.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to improving the lives of those affected by rare disease and continues to implement the commitments made in the UK Strategy for Rare Diseases.

There are three specialist centres in the country that prescribe enzyme replacement therapy for the treatment of lysosomal storage disorders. These diseases are very rare and the expertise to treat this cohort of patients is concentrated in these centres where staff are experienced in their care and where they are also engaged in research into these conditions.

Enzyme replacement therapy is usually delivered via an infusion at home with the support of homecare providers.

■ Rare Diseases: Diagnosis

Mark Tami:

[78528]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on the timely (a) assessment and (b) diagnosis of people with rare diseases; and what steps his Department plans to take to tackle the backlog of undiagnosed cases.

Jo Churchill:

The Department, alongside NHS England, is considering the impact of COVID-19 on patients with rare diseases. NHS England has had discussions with some services and patients/patient groups to understand the impact of COVID-19 including what has worked well; what has not worked so well; and opportunities for transformation.

NHS England as a direct commissioner of services and clinical commissioning group commissioners are currently working with all service providers to restore diagnostic capacity for all patient care groups.

NHS England will continue to look at what services can be delivered successfully through virtual communication technology such as telephone consultation and videoconferences. Where services do need to be delivered face-to-face, including the diagnosing of new cases, NHS England will work with providers to ensure that patients have a safe journey through the hospital to the treatment area.

■ Rare Diseases: Drugs

Mark Tami:

[78530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is taking steps to allocate additional funding to the specialised drug budget to cater for technologies being developed for new rare disease patient groups.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) issues guidance for the National Health Service on whether drugs and other treatments represent an effective use of NHS resources through its technology appraisal and highly specialised technologies programmes, including drugs for patients with rare diseases.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue to fund new treatments, including for rare diseases, in accordance with NICE guidance.

Through the Early Access to Medicines Scheme, we are already making important drugs available to patients. So far around 1,500 patients have benefited from the scheme, which enables drugs to be used in clinical practice in parallel with later stages of the regulatory process.

■ Self-harm: Children

Sir Edward Davey: [\[78476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children (a) attended A&E and (b) were admitted to hospital as a result of self-harming in each of the last five years.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Data is not available in the format requested.

■ Sheltered Housing: Coronavirus

Matt Western: [\[77768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to extend whole care home covid-19 testing to elderly residents and social care staff in sheltered accommodation facilities and retirement villages.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Expansion of testing is based on relative priorities and available testing capacity. We are not expanding regular asymptomatic testing to this group at this time.

We initially prioritised testing for care homes that specialise in caring for older people and those living with dementia in line with Public Health England and Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies advice, as they are at higher risk of adverse consequences if they get the disease.

■ Smoking

Lee Anderson: [\[78856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidelines are issued to GPs on recommending less damaging alternatives to cigarettes to help more people give up smoking.

Lee Anderson: [\[78857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that GPs encourage patients who refuse to give up smoking to instead use less damaging alternatives to cigarettes.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance, 'Stop smoking interventions and services', describes best practice, and, general practitioners are expected to take the guidance fully into account. The guidance recommends that for patients interested in using a nicotine-containing e-cigarette to quit smoking, the practitioner should explain that many people have found them helpful to quit smoking cigarettes and the evidence suggests e-cigarettes are substantially less harmful to health than smoking, but are not risk free, and that the evidence in this area is still developing, including evidence on the long-term health impacts.

Public Health England provides advice, information and resources for healthcare professionals on stop smoking support options, including e-cigarettes, and the evidence for their effectiveness.

Lee Anderson:

[78858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include all tobacco and nicotine containing products available in the UK in the forthcoming review of tobacco and e-cigarette policy.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has a legal commitment to undertake a Post Implementation Review of the Tobacco and Related Product Regulations 2016 (TRPR) and The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015. This will be completed by May 2021. The TRPR regulates both tobacco products and e-cigarettes. A response to the Post Implementation Reviews undertaken on tobacco legislation, implemented from 2010-2016, will be published later this year.

We continue to monitor the evidence base on the latest developments in the reduced-risk products market, including e-cigarettes, to assess their risks and evidence on how effective they are in helping smokers to quit smoking.

Lee Anderson:

[78859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish an evaluation of the effectiveness of 2019's Stoptober campaign in advance of any future Stoptober campaign.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England will publish an evaluation of the 2019 Stoptober campaign in autumn 2020.

The 2018 Stoptober evaluation is available to view at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835518/Stoptober_2018_evaluation.pdf

■ Surgery: Health Professions

John McDonnell:

[77506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled, Elective Surgery During COVID-19, published in June 2020 by the Royal College of Surgeons, what steps he plans to take to increase the level of the NHS workforce available for elective surgery.

Edward Argar:

Guidance has been issued to National Health Service providers and commissioning trusts on resetting non-COVID-19 services, including elective surgery. Decisions on how this is done, including apportionment of the workforce, will be taken at local level, based on local demand and local capacity. Infection control will be a guiding principle in the safe resumption of services.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, qualified staff who have previously left the NHS have been encouraged to return to the NHS to increase the available workforce. Additionally, an unprecedented deal with the independent sector will support the NHS in delivering elective surgery whilst maintaining capacity to deal with a potential second surge in COVID-19 cases.

■ Trikafta

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[77627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he had with representatives from (a) NICE and (b) NHS England on Kaftrio.

Jo Churchill:

Departmental ministers and officials regularly discuss a range of matters with colleagues in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and NHS England and NHS Improvement. Such discussions include the availability of medicines for the treatment of a number of conditions.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[78673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with (a) charities, (b) campaign groups and (c) pharmaceutical companies on the drug Kaftrio since 2018.

Jo Churchill:

The Department regularly engages with external stakeholders about a range of matters, including the availability of medicines for the treatment of a number of conditions.

■ Ventilators

Nadia Whittome: [\[71931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of supplies of anti-bacterial filters NHS trusts for people using home ventilators.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 14 July 2020]: We understand how challenging this period has been for people who rely on ventilation and we are doing everything we can to support patients, led by clinical advice.

COVID-19 has caused a significant increase in demand for clinical consumables and has disrupted international supply chains, making it more difficult to source products, including a small number of products for ventilators.

The Department, working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, has put in place a range of measures to address these challenges, including making it easier for clinicians to report shortages and identifying opportunities to open up new supply options and using additional brands.

We have received assurances from the key supplier of filters for ventilators that supply chains are now restored and they have resumed processing orders and working through the backlog. Currently none of the National Health Service trusts who supply patients in the community with these consumables are reporting critically low stock levels. However, we will of course keep this under very close review and, if necessary, work with suppliers to prioritise deliveries to areas with the greatest clinical need.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working closely with clinicians, trusts and suppliers to prepare for winter and ensure there are sufficient stocks of these consumables to meet the need of all patients who require home ventilation as well as for any future spike in COVID-19 cases going forward.

■ Ventilators: Children

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[74675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of ventilator stock for long term ventilated children.

Edward Argar:

We understand how challenging this period has been for children who rely on ventilation and their families and we are doing everything we can to support patients, led by clinical advice.

COVID-19 has caused a significant increase in demand for clinical consumables and has disrupted international supply chains, making it more difficult to source products, including a small number of products for children's ventilators.

The Department, working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, has put in place a range of measures to address these challenges, including making it easier for clinicians to report shortages and identifying opportunities to open up new supply options and using additional brands.

We have received assurances from the key supplier of filters for children's ventilators that supply chains are now restored and they have resumed processing orders and working through the backlog. Currently none of the National Health Service trusts who supply patients in the community with these consumables are reporting critically low stock levels. However, we will of course keep this under very close review and, if necessary, work with suppliers to prioritise deliveries to areas with the greatest clinical need.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working closely with clinicians, trusts and suppliers to prepare for winter and ensure there are sufficient stocks of these consumables to meet the need of all patients who require home ventilation as well as for any future spike in COVID-19 cases going forward.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[74676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure an adequate supply of (a) bacterial filters, (b) circuits and (c) other ventilator consumables for the treatment of children requiring ventilation.

Edward Argar:

We understand how challenging this period has been for children who rely on ventilation and their families and we are doing everything we can to support patients, led by clinical advice.

COVID-19 has caused a significant increase in demand for clinical consumables and has disrupted international supply chains, making it more difficult to source products, including a small number of products for children's ventilators.

The Department, working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, has put in place a range of measures to address these challenges, including making it easier for clinicians to report shortages and identifying opportunities to open up new supply options and using additional brands.

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NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working closely with clinicians, trusts and suppliers to prepare for winter and ensure there are sufficient stocks of these consumables to meet the need of all patients who require home ventilation as well as for any future spike in COVID-19 cases going forward.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[78738]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of ring-fencing ventilator supply budgets to help ensure the adequacy of supplies for the treatment of children requiring long-term ventilation in the winter months of 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

We understand how challenging this period has been for children who rely on ventilation and their families and we are doing everything we can to support patients, led by clinical advice.

On 17 July, the Prime Minister confirmed an additional £3 billion of funding to the National Health Service in England to prepare for winter.

COVID-19 has caused a significant increase in demand for clinical consumables and has disrupted international supply chains, making it more difficult to source products, including a small number of products for children's ventilators.

The Department, working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement, has put in place a range of measures to address these challenges, including making it easier for clinicians to report shortages and identifying opportunities to open up new supply options and using additional brands.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are also working closely with clinicians, trusts and suppliers to prepare for winter and ensure there are sufficient stocks of these consumables to meet the need of all patients who require home ventilation as well as for any future spike in COVID-19 cases going forward.

HOME OFFICE

■ Airports: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[44008]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Office, what recent assessment her Department has made of the merits of the introduction of (a) covid-19 screening measures and (b) quarantine arrangements for passengers arriving at UK airports.

Kevin Foster:

Our priority is to protect the public's health, to contain the spread of the virus and prevent a second wave.

Since 8 June, rules have been in place for entering the UK because of COVID-19. The rules are for residents and visitors. Passengers need to provide journey and contact details when travelling to the UK and will not be allowed to leave the place they are staying for the first 14 days except in very limited situations (known as self-isolation).

Passengers arriving in the UK are required to self-isolate for 14 days and can be contacted throughout this period to ensure compliance.

Since 10 July travellers will not have to self-isolate if arriving and staying in England from a country or territory on the travel corridors list. Travellers will still have to provide journey and contact details. You can find the latest Travel Corridors list by following this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>.

Travellers will still be required to self-isolate if they have visited or stopped in any country which is not on the list in the previous 14 days.

A limited number of exemptions to the measures have been agreed. For example, those travelling in order to maintain essential supply chains, or our national infrastructure or who are contributing to the crisis response will not be required to self-isolate.

A full list of exemptions to the requirements to provide locator details or self-isolate can be found on GOV.UK at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules>.

The need for the restrictions is regularly reviewed. The reviews are guided by the scientific advice and consider factors such as the domestic and international incidence of COVID-19, and the level of infection and transmission. The economic impact of the measures, and new initiatives being trialled to secure safe travel, are also considered during these reviews.

■ Amazon: Nitrous Oxide

Stephen Morgan: [77787]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions has she had with representatives from Amazon on the online sale of Nitrous Oxide for recreational consumption in the UK.

Stephen Morgan: [77788]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to reduce the level of online sale of Nitrous Oxide for recreational purposes to people aged 16 to 25 years old.

Kit Malthouse:

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 makes it an offence (with limited exemptions) to intentionally supply psychoactive substances, including nitrous oxide, where the person knows, or is reckless as to whether, the psychoactive substance is likely to be consumed by a person for its psychoactive effects.

There have been no recent discussions with Amazon regarding sales of nitrous oxide for recreational consumption, however Government guidance is available to all retailers to satisfy themselves that they comply with the law. The guidance recommends that retailers, including those operating online, should pay particular attention to the potential for abuse of nitrous oxide, especially where customers seek to buy in bulk or large volumes, and suggests that retailers may wish to carry out age checks to prevent those at highest risk from gaining access to psychoactive substances.

In relation to further steps the Government is taking to reduce the sale of nitrous oxide for recreational use, we intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems in place to deal with harmful content on their internet services and keep users safe. Illegal and harmful activity online such as the supply of psychoactive substances for their psychoactive effect will fall within the scope of the planned legislation.

■ Animal Experiments

Alex Sobel:

[5531]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018 report published in July 2019, for what reason there was a 7 per cent increase in the use of animals in higher education and training between 2017 and 2018; what those experiments involved; and at what level of higher education those experiments took place.

Victoria Atkins:

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 provides for the authorisation of licences for higher education and training. The numbers of animals used in higher education and training each year depends on a number of factors that support a trained and skilled workforce, including the required programmes of work and available funding.

Information on the type of procedures conducted during animal experiments is collected by establishments, not the Home Office. The Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) is required under the legislation to collect annual statistics on the use of protected animals in regulated procedures. This requirement is for the *categorisation* of the purpose of the procedures but does not include collecting information on the *types* of procedures undertaken during animal experiments.

The statistics do not differentiate the numbers of procedures at any given level of higher education.

■ Animal Experiments: Dogs

Alex Sobel:

[13057]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the report entitled, Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, for what reason there has been a 16 per cent increase in dog use since 2017; and what steps the Government is taking to (a) reduce and (b) replace the use of dogs in experiments.

Victoria Atkins:

With reference to the report entitled Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, the Home Office has not reviewed why there was a 16% increase in the use of dogs in 2018. The baseline numbers of animals used in scientific procedures are influenced by a range of factors. The Home Office assures that, in every research proposal: animals are replaced with non-animal alternatives wherever possible; the number of animals are reduced to the minimum necessary to achieve the result sought; and that, for those animals which must be used, procedures are refined as much as possible to minimise their suffering.

■ Asylum: Families**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[77817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of additional Dublin Regulation requests that will be decided in the UK after the end of the transition period.

Chris Philp:

The UK will cease to participate in the Dublin Regulation at the end of the transition period. However, the Immigration, Nationality and Asylum (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 contain a “savings provision” to enable a Dublin family reunion request, made before 1 January 2021, to continue to be processed after that date.

■ Asylum: Interviews**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[78693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of online remote asylum interviews.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office takes the wellbeing of asylum seekers extremely seriously and has already put in place a range of measures to support asylum applicants affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

However, it is crucial to our applicants that we restart processing their applications for protection as soon as it is safe to do so. The Home Office has successfully used video technology to support remote interviewing for more than 2 years and has appropriate operating procedures that are designed to ensure participants are able to give the best account of their circumstances.

To keep people safe but allow the Home Office to gather the additional information needed to make a decision on their claim for protection, Asylum Operations have secured additional mobile digital and video interviewing kit that enables more applicants to be interviewed remotely.

The Home Office has been clear that it would not restart interviews until it is safe to do so. We are now in a position where we can ensure safe social distancing and have started to issue interview invitations with an expectation that interviews volumes will increase over the coming weeks, including those taking place face to face.

■ Detention Centres: Risk Assessment**Alison Thewliss:**[\[77687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many pieces of medical evidence her Department has received since January 2017 under the Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention policy by (a) month and (b) immigration removal centre.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office can receive medical evidence from a variety of sources including individual's own accounts, reports from individual General Practitioners and medical advisors, other privately sourced medical advisors, as well as via medical practitioners based within Immigration Removal Centres under Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules. Regardless of the source, all evidence received is considered by immigration case workers.

The number of reports that are provided by medical practitioners based in Immigration Removal Centres under Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules are published quarterly as part of Immigration Enforcement transparency data. The latest publication can be found on gov.uk at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-enforcement-data-february-2020>

Medical evidence received from other sources are not centrally recorded and the amount received cannot be obtained without reviewing individual case files, which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Alison Thewliss:[\[78724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many pieces of external medical evidence on adults at risk in immigration detention received by her Department since January 2017 have been found to be produced solely for the purpose of release rather than for highlighting vulnerability by (a) month, (b) immigration removal centre, and (c) document type.

Chris Philp:

Medical evidence received from external sources is not centrally recorded on Home Office systems and the number of pieces of evidence received cannot be obtained without reviewing individual case files, which could only be done at disproportionate cost.

All medical evidence received is considered in line with the Adults at Risk Policy and any decisions in relation to continued detention will be made having reviewed any evidence received. Release reasons are recorded but do not consider the assumed intention behind the submissions of such evidence.

Christine Jardine:[\[78829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the for the implications of her policy of the findings of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's annual inspection report on Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention, 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office published its response to the ICIBI's report in April of this year. The ICIBI made eight recommendations, of which the Home Office has accepted two, partially accepted five and rejected one. The full report can be found here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm>

ent_data/file/882002/Response_to_the_annual_inspection_of_adults_at_risk_in_immigration_detention.pdf

■ **Exploitation: Children**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[75236]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a cross-Departmental assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the National Referral Mechanism for preventing the criminalisation of people who have been subject to child criminal exploitation.

Victoria Atkins:

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery, to prevent victims from being punished for crimes they were forced to commit. The non-punishment principle is an integral part of the Government's response to safeguard victims of modern slavery who have been compelled to commit a crime. In the case of an adult, committing the crime as a direct result of being a victim; in the case of a child, at the hands of their exploiters.

The statutory defence operates independently of the National referral Mechanism (NRM), the system for identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery. A referral into the NRM is not a requirement to use the statutory defence.

The effectiveness of the statutory defence was assessed by the Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act following concerns raised by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the police about its use. The Review found that the defence strikes the correct balance between protecting genuine victims and preventing misuse from opportunistic criminals. However, concerns about the potential misuse of the defence continue to be raised, including by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in its recent thematic inspection on county lines. That is why we are working closely with the CPS, the police and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to monitor this.

Any person who is suspected of being a victim of modern slavery can be referred for support into the NRM. In the case of children, local authorities are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in their area and work in close co-operation with the police and other statutory agencies to offer potential child victims the protection and support they require.

■ **Home Office: Staff**

Jon Trickett:

[77520]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when staff of his Department will be required to return to the office as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

James Brokenshire:

The department has continued to deliver priority activity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic using a combination of workplace and home working. Almost a quarter of

Home Office staff have been attending their designated workplace over the course of the pandemic.

As the pandemic has progressed, the department has returned some staff to the workplace inline with Covid secure guidance. We will continue to return staff to our workplaces up to the building capacity our COVID secure risk assessments permit.

■ Home Office: Training

Neil O'Brien:

[\[77794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many staff in her Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

James Brokenshire:

1.) Training on unconscious bias is primarily provided through the Unconscious Bias eLearning package on the Civil Service Learning site. The table below shows the number of individual Home Office staff that have undertaken this course in each of the last five financial years:

Table 1: Take up of Unconscious Bias eLearning

PERIOD	NUMBER OF STAFF
1 April 15 to 31 Mar 16	1,893
1 April 16 to 31 Mar 17	2,862
1 April 17 to 31 Mar 18	5,179
1 April 18 to 31 Mar 19	7,925
1 April 19 to 31 Mar 20	15,306

2.) In addition to the Unconscious Bias eLearning package the subject of unconscious bias has been included in the Diversity & Inclusion eLearning package on the Civil Service Learning site from May 2019. The table below shows the number of Home Office staff that have undertaken this course from 1 May 2019 to 31 March 2020:

Table 2: Take up of Diversity & Inclusion eLearning

PERIOD	NUMBER OF STAFF
1 May 19 to 31 Mar 20	14,460

3.) Civil Service Learning also provide a half day workshop on unconscious bias, aimed at Senior Civil Servants. A total of 23 Home Office Senior Civil Servants staff have attended this workshop as shown below:

Table 3: Take up of Unconscious Bias workshop

PERIOD	NUMBER OF STAFF
1 April 18 to 31 Mar 19	2
1 April 19 to 31 Mar 20	21

4.) It should be noted that all figures include permanent Home Office Civil Servants only; contactors working on behalf of the Home Office are not included.

■ Immigrants: Domestic Abuse

Jess Phillips: [\[77654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a specific strategy on violence against migrant women.

Jess Phillips: [\[77655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) consult specialist BME organisations as part of her Department's violence against women and girls strategy refresh and (b) ensure that strategy contains a section on the needs of abused (i) BME and (ii) migrant women when seeking protection.

Victoria Atkins:

Protecting women and girls from violence remains a key priority of this Government. In March 2019 we published a refreshed Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to update and reinforce our commitment to tackling VAWG.

We are committed to the fight against VAWG and we welcome the views of people across civil society on how best to address these crimes.

We have met regularly with organisations that support BME victims and survivors to discuss both the VAWG Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Bill.

We have prioritised those at risk of domestic abuse throughout the coronavirus pandemic national health emergency, including BME victims.

When allocating some of our emergency funding packages to support the most vulnerable in society at this time, we have specifically encouraged bids from organisations who support minority groups, including BME victims of domestic abuse. We have, for example, allocated £51,714 to Southall Black Sisters, which supports female BME victims of domestic abuse and other forms of VAWG, to enable them to develop an online chat application and a national online referral form to manage the greater number of contacts which they have received as a result of the pandemic.

As part of the Domestic Abuse Bill, we have published draft statutory guidance setting out how individuals can be the victims of multiple and different abusive behaviours because of the way different characteristics, including immigration status, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic position and sexuality intersect and overlap,

particularly in relation to accessing services and support if they are not adequately designed to meet their needs. The guidance also sets out how those from BME backgrounds may experience additional barriers to receiving help or reporting abuse.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's role description states that they must adopt a specific focus on the needs of victims and survivors of domestic abuse from minority or marginalised groups with particular needs, such as victims who are BAME. A thematic lead within the Commissioner's office will be identified for each of these groups.

■ Immigrants: Finance

Jess Phillips:

[77653]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that Government's £1.5m Support for Migrant Victims pilot scheme will be led by specialist BME sector organisations with experience and expertise of working with migrant victims with no recourse to public funds.

Victoria Atkins:

We are currently developing the competition strategy with the aim to open the bidding process for the £1.5 million Support for Migrant Victims (SMV) Scheme as soon as possible. By running an open competitive process, we will be encouraging all suitable organisations with experience and expertise of working with and supporting migrant survivors of domestic abuse to engage and apply, as well as engaging with the Designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

Christine Jardine:

[77776]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the no recourse to public funds policy in the absence of available data and statistics on (a) those subject to and (b) those experiencing hardship as a result of the implementation of that policy.

Chris Philp:

The no recourse to public funds policy is based on the principle that migrants coming to the UK are generally expected to maintain and support themselves and their families without posing a burden on the UK's welfare system. The public interest for them to be financially independent is long established. There are existing safeguards and exceptions in place for those in need, for example refugees and those on human rights routes who would otherwise be destitute.

The department has written to the UKSA with regard to the matter of data on no recourse to public funds. Please see the link below:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-from-daniel-shaw-to-ed-humpherson-parliamentary-question-response/>. The letter commits to investigating the administrative data held on no recourse to public funds and migration, and to assessing whether meaningful information can be provided on the issue of hardship in particular. We will provide an update on this in due course.

The Home Office has also published its policy equality statement on the impact of the no recourse to public funds policy for migrants on the 10-year Family and Human Rights immigration routes. It can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-change-of-conditions-of-leave-to-allow-access-to-public-funds-if-your-circumstances-change>.

Christine Jardine:

[77778]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been received since the change of conditions form for recourse to public funds was digitised at the beginning of April; what proportion of those applications have been granted; and what the average processing time for those applications was.

Christine Jardine:

[77779]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of processing change of conditions for recourse to public funds application forms within 24 hours.

Kevin Foster:

The information you have requested is not currently published by the department.

The department has written to the UKSA with regard to this matter. Please see the link below: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-from-daniel-shaw-to-ed-humpherson-parliamentary-question-response/>

We are continuing to investigate whether the administrative data held by the department can provide any meaningful data in future.

While we appreciate the need for Change of Conditions applications to be dealt with quickly, there is no need for all applications to be processed within 24 hours. Individuals are not necessarily destitute when they make an application, but instead may recognise they are at risk of destitution in the near future because there has been a recent change in their financial circumstances, for example.

Cases must be assessed based on the evidence the applicant has provided, and where there is insufficient evidence, caseworkers request further information which inevitably extends the processing time but can ensure the appropriate decision is reached.

During the covid-19 crisis the application form has been digitised, and we are encouraging applicants to send in their evidence by email so that it can be received and uploaded onto cases more quickly. Where applicants are unable to provide certain evidence, particularly under the current circumstances, we have provided staff with instructions as to how and when flexibility can be exercised to help reduce unnecessary delays that would be introduced by having to seek additional evidence.

The Change of Conditions team are working through applications as quickly as they can, and UKVI have trained additional staff to work on these cases in response to the increased demand and urgency during the current situation.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Dr Matthew Offord:

[77573]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the EU Settlement Resolution Centre telephone service has been closed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The Settlement Resolution Centre followed Public Health England advice to ensure staff worked from home where possible, this led to a short period during which phone lines were closed to incoming calls.

The telephone service was quickly re-established with lines reopening, on a limited basis, on 1 May and a full service resumed on 11 May.

While phone access was unavailable, the centre continued to receive and respond to enquiries made via the online contact form. These enquiries were from the customers themselves or were made via a dedicated contact form for organisations acting on behalf of more vulnerable groups.

Catherine West:

[78787]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish the Policy Equality Statement for the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Policy Equality Statement for the EU Settlement Scheme will be published shortly.

■ Immigration: Health Insurance

Hywel Williams:

[77524]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will remove the requirement for EU, EEA and Swiss nationals with Settled Status to have had Comprehensive Sickness Insurance when studying or self-sufficient in order to be able to be granted British citizenship.

Hywel Williams:

[77525]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to page 28 of her Department's document entitled, Nationality policy: Naturalisation as a British citizen by discretion, published on 14 May 2020, if she will provide a definition of what constitutes compelling grounds to exercise discretion.

Hywel Williams:

[77526]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of (a) EU, (b) EEA and (c) Swiss nationals in the UK who do not hold comprehensive sickness Insurance.

Kevin Foster:

To meet the statutory requirements for naturalisation, a person of any nationality must have been in the UK lawfully during the residential qualifying period.

EEA Regulations set out the requirements which EEA nationals needed to follow if they wished to reside here lawfully on the basis of free movement. In the case of students or the self-sufficient, but not those who were working here, the possession of comprehensive sickness insurance has always been a requirement under them.

The British Nationality Act allows us to exercise discretion over this requirement in the special circumstances of any particular case. We cannot therefore prescribe when discretion will or will not be exercised. UKVI will consider cases sensitively, taking into account the nature and reasons for any period of unlawful residence alongside other information relevant to the individual.

There are no plans to amend legislation in this respect.

We do not have figures for the number of EU, EEA Swiss nationals in the UK who do not hold comprehensive sickness Insurance. It is only required where a person is either self-sufficient or a student. As EEA and Swiss nationals did not previously need to hold a document confirming their status, we cannot say how many failed to comply with this requirement.

■ Immigration: Hong Kong

Jim Shannon:

[\[77625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary on the potential for non-Chinese ethnic minority British citizens resident in Hong Kong to relocate immediately to the UK with non-EEA national dependants.

Jim Shannon:

[\[77626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that non-Chinese ethnic minority British citizens resident in Hong Kong are able to immediately relocate to the UK accompanied by non-EEA national dependants following the enactment of the national security law in Hong Kong.

Kevin Foster:

All British Citizens have the right of abode, meaning they can freely enter and remain in the UK.

For a non-EEA dependant, the family Immigration Rules already permit a non-EEA family member to accompany or join a British citizen to come to or remain in the UK. The family member (partner, parent, child, or adult dependent relative) must make a valid application and meet the requirements under Appendix FM. If successful, they are granted 33 months Entry Clearance on a route to Settlement.

If necessary, consideration can also be given to granting leave outside the Immigration Rules on an exceptional basis – although such a consideration also requires a valid application to be made.

■ Immigration: Married People

Kirsten Oswald: [\[78713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40657, whether she asked the Migration Advisory Committee to consider and make recommendations on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet minimum income requirements.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[78714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40657, whether the Migration Advisory Committee made recommendations on measures needed to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet minimum income requirements.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[78715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40657, what changes she made to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet minimum income requirements.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[78716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40657, what assessment she made of (a) the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet minimum income requirements and (b) the changes required to the criteria to enable those spouses and partners to meet that requirement.

Kirsten Oswald: [\[78717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 4 May 2020 to Question 40657, what discussions she has had with the devolved administrations on (a) the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of non-EEA spouses and partners to meet minimum income requirements and (b) the changes required to the criteria to enable those spouses and partners to meet that requirement.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has proactively established a range of measures to support those affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the situation closely and take these exceptional circumstances into account.

To ensure spouses or partners applying for entry clearance, leave to remain or indefinite leave are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control, for the purpose of the minimum income requirement:

- a temporary loss of employment income between 1 March and 31 July 2020 due to COVID-19 will be disregarded, provided the requirement was met for at least six months up to March 2020;

- an applicant or sponsor furloughed under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be deemed as earning 100% of their salary;
- a temporary loss of annual income due to COVID-19 between 1 March 2020 and 31 July 2020 will generally be disregarded for self-employment income, along with the impact on employment income from the same period for future applications. Income received via the Coronavirus Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will also be taken into account;
- evidential flexibility may be applied where an applicant or sponsor experiences difficulty accessing specified evidence due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Guidance for our customers is available on GOV.UK here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chapter-8-appendix-fm-family-members>

This also sets out the ways in which the minimum income requirement can be met using other sources of income instead of, or along with, income from employment or self-employment. For example, income from the couple's investments, property rental or pension may also be taken into account, together with their cash savings.

These are unprecedented times. We continue to monitor the situation closely and may make further adjustments to requirements where necessary and appropriate to ensure people are not unduly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

■ Intelligence Services: Registration

Anthony Mangnall:

[77809]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals for a foreign agents registration Act.

James Brokenshire:

The risks posed to the UK from hostile state activity have both grown and diversified. We are committed to providing our law enforcement and security services with the tools they need to tackle the evolving threats to the UK, both domestically and overseas.

The Home Office is working at pace to review the legislation relating to hostile state activity to assess whether additional powers are required to clamp down on the activities of hostile states which threaten the UK.

As part of this review we are examining the different laws that govern foreign agent registration in like-minded countries to understand whether these have been effective in tackling the threats they face from hostile states. We will use this learning to ensure that any new legislation is effective and addresses the threats we face in the UK.

This work is ongoing and has not yet reached its conclusions.

■ Internet: Safety

Mary Kelly Foy:

[77806]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children and young people have been identified as victims of child sexual abuse since the Online Harms White Paper was published in April 2019; and what steps her Department is taking to protect vulnerable children from sexual abuse and exploitation online while the Government produces its full response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

Victoria Atkins:

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse is an abhorrent crime, and the Home Office works closely with technology companies, law enforcement and NGOs to tackle and prevent this crime as a top priority.

In the year from April 2019 to March 2020, the NCA and UK policing identified 793 victims within indecent images of children, compared with 552 in the previous fiscal year. The NCA and policing continue to undertake work to identify children within indecent images as part of their daily activity.

Additionally, in the year from April 2019 to March 2020, the NCA and UK policing made approximately 7,200 arrests and safeguarded and protected around 8,300 children in relation to online child sexual abuse. Many of the children who were safeguarded or protected will have been victims of child sexual abuse.

The Online Harms White Paper set out plans to introduce a statutory duty of care on companies to address a range of harms on their platforms and services, including online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Ahead of legislation coming into force and an independent regulator being operational, Government will publish an interim code of practice on child sexual exploitation and abuse, setting out steps that companies can take now to prevent and tackle this crime. This interim code will be published in the Autumn, alongside the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

The Government is committed to tackling online child sexual exploitation and abuse and recognises many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. Guidance has been published for parents and children outlining resources to help keep children safe from different risks online, including online grooming, and where to go to receive support and advice - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>.

In May, the Government pledged more than £76 million extra funding to support the most vulnerable in society during the pandemic. The funding has been made available for charities to support survivors of abuse, including child sexual abuse.

Recognising the impact of the current situation upon harms such as child sexual abuse the Prime Minister hosted the government's first Hidden Harms virtual summit in May. It was attended by over 70 representatives from across government, the

NHS, law enforcement, charities and frontline services, as well as survivors of hidden harms. The summit was an opportunity to share emerging best practice at the local and national level and identify areas to go further over the coming months.

Home Office Ministers have met with the Internet Watch Foundation, children's charities, the tech industry and other parties to understand the online threat to children during the pandemic. They also wrote to industry partners to ensure that countering online child sexual exploitation and abuse remains a priority during the pandemic.

The Government is continuing to engage with technology companies around the *Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, a framework of principles launched by the Five Country Ministerial partners in March. In collaboration with UK, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and United States governments, our partners in the technology industry have developed a new campaign to help keep children safe online during COVID-19. This launched on 17 April, with parents and carers directed to online safety resources on GOV.UK, and children directed to Childline.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Janet Daby: [\[78854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she intends to respond to my letter of 6 April on notice of marriage fees.

Kevin Foster:

A response was sent by myself as the relevant Minister on 24 July 2020.

■ **Migrant Workers: Redundancy**

Nadia Whittome: [\[78942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of granting Leave to Remain to people in the UK on a Tier 2 Visa who have been made redundant during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

Tier 2 is an employer led route aimed at filling a specific vacancy where the organisation cannot fill it from within the domestic labour market. The Government does not have any plans to grant leave to remain to those made redundant as a result of the Covid pandemic and have no other basis of stay.

However, the Government has put in place measures to support people at this time which people on a Tier 2 visa would be eligible for support from including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough). This must be part of a company-wide policy, with the relevant visa holders considered as part of this, but this will allow many employers to retain staff rather than making them redundant.

■ Passports

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[78694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the number of passport applications that are processed in a timely manner.

Kevin Foster:

Her Majesty's Passport Office is increasing capacity for processing passport applications, while continuing to operate in line with public health advice and social distancing guidelines.

This includes the development of a new system which substantially increases the ability to process applications from home and occupying additional government office space to increase the number able to come into work.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[78697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the performance of the Passport Office in processing passport renewals.; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

Her Majesty's Passport Office has continued to operate throughout the coronavirus pandemic, however it had to scale back its work as a result of changed working practices designed to keep both customers and staff safe.

During this difficult time HM Passport Office has prioritised urgent and compassionate cases and is now working hard to get back to full capacity as soon as it is able to do so in line with public health guidance.

■ Passports: EU Countries

Apsana Begum:

[\[78880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will waive fees for renewing a passport for people who travel often for work when the new rules on the passport expiry date come into force for travel to the EU after the transition period.

Kevin Foster:

There are no plans to waive any passport fees after the transition period.

Fees are charged to cover the full cost of providing the service, granting fee waivers means other customers would have to pay more to subsidise those waivers. All passport customers need to check they have appropriate validity for travel to the EU or anywhere else in the world. Guidance is available on Gov.UK

■ Prisoners: Repatriation

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to remove foreign national offenders from the UK during the covid-19 pandemic.

Chris Philp:

We remain committed to removing foreign national offenders during the pandemic. We continue to remove where there are available routes and by charter flight operations.

On all removal flights public health guidance is adhered to, those on flights are seen by a healthcare professional before they are returned and anyone who is exhibiting symptoms would be removed from the flight and placed into medical isolation.

Foreign national offenders (FNOs) should be in no doubt of our determination to remove them and since 2010, we have removed more than 53,000.

Refugees: Children**Christine Jardine:**[\[11111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to provide safe passage to the UK for unaccompanied child refugees in Europe who have relatives in the UK.

Chris Philp:

Throughout the transition period, we will continue to honour our commitments under the Dublin III Regulation, including the transfers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to the UK who have qualifying family members in the UK where it is in their best interests. We continue to remain in close contact with sending states, to facilitate transfers as quickly and safely as possible in accordance with respective governments' decisions on Covid-19 and the Dublin Regulation.

Furthermore, we will continue to process all Take Charge Requests made under the family reunion provisions of the Regulation which are received on or before the 31 December 2020.

The UK has presented a genuine and sincere offer to the EU for a new, reciprocal arrangement for the family reunion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children post-transition, and on 19 May published its draft legal text as a constructive contribution to negotiations.

Refugees: Families**Tim Farron:**[\[78603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timetable is for the publication of the report by the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration on Refugee Family Reunion for which evidence was called for in June 2019.

Chris Philp:

The Home Secretary is considering the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's report on Family Reunion Applications and it will be laid in Parliament as soon as possible.

ICIBI reports can only be laid before Parliament when both houses are sitting.

■ Religious Buildings: Security

Stephen Doughty:

[12907]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many places of worship have received funding from her Department for additional safety and security measures by religious denomination in Wales in the last 12 months; and how much each such place of worship has received.

Victoria Atkins:

The Places of Worship Protective Security Fund (POW) is a key commitment in the Hate Crime Action Plan published in 2016. The Scheme provides funding to places of worship that have been victims of or are vulnerable to hate crime attacks and provides for physical protective measures such as alarms, fencing and access control. The fifth year of the scheme recently closed, and successful applicants will be announced in due course.

Funding in the region of £38,500 was allocated to one place of worship in Wales in year four (2019/2020). The scheme is open to places of worship across England and Wales, and we will continue to promote the scheme across Wales for future rounds of funding.

The Jewish Community Protective Security Grant was introduced in 2015 following a series of terrorist attacks against Jews and Jewish locations across Europe. For 2019-20 a grant of £14m was provided to fund additional protective security measures, primarily guarding, at Jewish state, free and independent schools, colleges, nurseries and some other Jewish community sites, including synagogues. A grant of £14m is to be provided in 2020-21. We do not keep a breakdown of funding by region.

■ Slavery

Karen Bradley:

[R] [77602]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to update the Modern Slavery Strategy.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and bringing those individuals responsible both in the UK and overseas to justice. The response is underpinned by the [Modern Slavery Strategy 2014](#) and the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), the first legislation of its kind in the world.

The Government is identifying more victims of modern slavery and doing more to bring perpetrators to justice than ever before. In 2019, the Government's manifesto included a commitment to continue the campaign to eradicate the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking. In May 2020, at the Prime Minister's Virtual Summit on Hidden Harms, the Government reiterated the absolute priority that we place on preventing and protecting those at risk from hidden harms, including modern slavery.

In addition, the Government recently established the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Transformation Programme, which will address the challenges that the current NRM system faces. The NRM is the process by which the UK identifies and supports potential victims of modern slavery. Building on the successes of recent NRM reforms, the NRM Transformation Programme will make sure genuine victims have their cases settled promptly, receive support tailored to their needs, and are empowered to move on with their lives.

The UK is the first country in the world to require businesses to report on the steps they have taken to tackle modern slavery in their operations and global supply chains. This landmark 'Transparency in Supply Chains' provision in the Modern Slavery Act encourages a change in business culture, spotlighting modern slavery risks on boardroom agendas and within the international human rights community. In addition, on 26 March 2020, we became the first country to publish a Government Modern Slavery Statement setting out the steps we have taken to identify and prevent modern slavery in our own supply chains.

■ Telecommunications

Chi Onwurah:

[74564]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment the Government has made of (a) the compliance of digital supply chains with the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and (b) the accuracy of Huawei's statements pursuant to section 54(1) of that Act.

Victoria Atkins:

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain businesses, in all sectors, including the digital industry and businesses supplying digital goods or services, with a turnover of £36m or more to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

The prevalence of modern slavery and complexity of global supply chains means that it is highly unlikely that any sector or company is immune from the risks of modern slavery. Section 54 therefore does not require organisations to certify that their supply chains are 'slavery free' or that the Government verifies the content of modern slavery statements. The Government encourages companies to report transparently about how they are mitigating modern slavery risks and to use their modern slavery statements to demonstrate year on year progress.

The transparency legislation was designed to enable consumers, investors and civil society to scrutinise business action. To improve reporting quality, accountability and accessibility of statements, we are developing a government-run registry which will host modern slavery statements. We have also consulted on proposals to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act, including requiring organisations to report on the steps they have taken within specific areas, including due diligence, and introducing civil penalties for non-compliance. The Government response will be published this summer .

■ Visas: Married People

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[77820]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the use of the Public statement: relationship no longer subsisting forms.

Chris Philp:

Migrants who are granted leave to remain in the UK on the basis of a marriage or partnership are directed to inform the Home Office when there has been a change in their relationship, such as separation or divorce. Information on how to do this is available on the following page: <https://www.gov.uk/visas-when-you-separate-or-divorce>

The purpose of the notification is to enable a review of a person's circumstances where the basis upon which they were granted leave to remain has changed.

Upon receipt of notification that a relationship is no longer subsisting, the Home Office will review each case on an individual basis before deciding whether it is appropriate to curtail the previously granted leave to remain.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ Parliament: Staff

Grahame Morris:

[76665]

To ask the hon. Member for Perth and North Perthshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps the Commission is taking to ensure that Parliamentary staff are protected in the event that they raise health and safety concerns.

Pete Wishart:

The health and safety of all those who work for, or visit the House, continues to be a key priority of the House of Commons Commission. This has included the creation of a safety and security at work module, covering health and safety and the routes to raise concerns, mandatory training which all Parliamentary staff are required to complete on an annual basis.

Staff are actively encouraged to report safety queries or concerns through their line manager, safety coordinator, a trade union safety representative or one of the safety advisers in the Parliamentary Safety Team.

All passholders on the estate are expected to follow the behaviour code, which are designed to protect and support all those on the estate. Should a member of staff have concerns that this would not be the case a fully independent process exists for raising safety concerns through the whistleblowing policy.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Affordable Housing: Construction**

Mike Amesbury: [\[78851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to increase developer contributions to affordable housing.

Christopher Pincher:

We intend to reform the current approach to developer contributions by creating a new, single system, the Infrastructure Levy. This new Levy would be a flat rate, value based charge, set nationally, at either a single rate, or at area specific rates, and charged on the final value of a development. The new Levy would be able to fund both affordable housing and supporting infrastructure. We will aim for the new Levy to raise more revenue than under the current system of developer contributions, and deliver at least as much – if not more – on-site affordable housing as at present. Our proposals are set out in our White Paper ‘Planning for the Future’ which was published on 6 August and is out to consultation until 29 October.

■ Building Safety Fund

Mike Amesbury: [\[76888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of registrations for the Building Safety Fund have stated that they are a (a) local authority and (b) housing association.

Christopher Pincher:

Registration to the Building Safety Fund closed on 31 July and we are currently reviewing and verifying the registration data. We will publish registration statistics next month. Based on our analysis to date, the proportion of local authority and housing association applicants to the Building Safety Fund has been low. MHCLG only sought registrations from Registered Providers with financial viability issues. For Registered Providers who do not have financial viability concerns, the claim process to allow them to claim costs which would otherwise be passed to leaseholders opened on 1 August.

■ Fire Extinguishers

Neil Coyle: [\[77648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether (a) new homes constructed as part of an upward extension on an existing block which takes it over 11m in height and (b) pre-existing homes in that block will be required to have a sprinkler system fitted from 1 August 2020.

Neil Coyle:

[77650]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to paragraph 7.9 of Approved Document B of the Building Regulations 2010 (2019 edition), whether a rooftop extension and the building the extension is constructed on, are considered to be separate parts for the purposes of a fire risk assessment of the building and therefore for the requirement for a sprinkler system.

Christopher Pincher:

For the purposes of Approved Document B, 'separated part' is defined in Appendix D, Diagram D5 of that document. This provides that a separated part should be separated from another part of the same building by a compartment wall, to the full height of the part, in one vertical plane. This is unlikely to apply to a rooftop extension. It is the responsibility of those undertaking the building work to demonstrate the regulations are met, and each building project should be considered individually. We have published advice on this subject in a circular letter which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887227/Approved Document B May 2020 amendment - Circular letter 2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887227/Approved_Document_B_May_2020_amendment_-_Circular_letter_2020.pdf) .

Neil Coyle:

[77649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to fund the retrofitting of sprinklers in homes owned by (a) leaseholders, (b) local authorities, (c) housing associations and (d) other organisations.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear that building owners are responsible for making sure that any existing residential building has the appropriate fire safety in place, including the retrofit of sprinklers where necessary. Sprinklers are only one of the fire safety measures which can be provided in an overall fire safety package and an appropriate level of fire safety can be achieved without the need to retrofit sprinklers. Building owners should take advice from competent professionals and decide whether or not to retrofit sprinklers.

Neil Coyle:

[77652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to enable local authorities to enforce the retrofitting of sprinklers in leaseholder properties.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has been clear that building owners are responsible for making sure that any existing residential building has the appropriate fire safety in place, including the retrofit of sprinklers where necessary. Sprinklers are only one of the fire safety measures which can be provided in an overall fire safety package and an appropriate level of fire safety can be achieved without the need to retrofit sprinklers. Building owners should take advice from competent professionals and decide whether or not

to retrofit sprinklers. For buildings in scope of the new building safety regime, the Accountable Person will be required to demonstrate how they are managing fire and structural risks on an ongoing basis.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: Coronavirus

Ian Mearns:

[76669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to extend the existing Help to Buy Scheme for people purchasing new homes, where the build completion date has been extended beyond the deadline as a result of the disruption caused by the covid-19 outbreak.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises that there have been delays caused by Covid-19, resulting in some homes reserved under the Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme not being built within the current scheme deadlines. Therefore, on 31st July a two-month extension was announced to the building completion deadline from 31 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. The legal completion deadline for the purchase remains 31 March 2021. The Government also announced an extra measure to protect existing customers who have experienced severe delays as a result of coronavirus. Homes England, who administer the Help to Buy scheme, will work with those who had a reservation in place before 30 June to assess their situation and look to provide an extension where necessary. In which case, they will have until 31 May 2021 to legally complete. More information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/help-to-buy-scheme-extended> . Meanwhile the Government's new Help to Buy scheme, which will replace the current scheme and is for first time buyers only, will commence on 1 April 2021 and run until March 2023. There are no plans for further extensions. Further details on the Government's new Help to Buy Scheme can be found at: <https://www.helptobuy.gov.uk/equity-loan/help-to-buy-equity-loan-2021-2023/> .

■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Neil Coyle:

[77651]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the definition of a high-rise block for fire-safety purposes is a building over (a) 11 metres or (b) 18 metres tall.

Christopher Pincher:

There is no statutory definition for high-rise

■ High Rise Flats: Insulation

Preet Kaur Gill:

[R] [77746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost of waking watches services to leaseholders in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[R] [\[77749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average (a) weekly and (b) monthly cost to leaseholders in buildings with unsafe cladding systems of (i) temporary safety measures, (ii) legal fees, (iii) insurance premiums and (iv) other ancillary fees related to fire safety.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[R] [\[77750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average service charge to leaseholders in (a) residential buildings and (b) residential buildings with unsafe cladding systems in (i) Edgbaston constituency, (ii) Birmingham and (iii) the West Midlands.

Christopher Pincher:

Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Fire, is investigating what can be done to reduce the cost of waking watch for buildings that currently have them in place. This includes ensuring that waking watch costs are transparent so that leaseholders and others who commission these services can ensure that costs are reasonable. The Department does not currently hold specific data on service charges or other ancillary costs to leaseholders related to fire safety in buildings with unsafe cladding systems.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[R] [\[77751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for the completion of (a) fire safety assessments and (b) the removal of unsafe (i) ACM and (ii) non-ACM cladding systems from residential buildings 18 metres and over in (A) Birmingham and (B) the West Midlands.

Christopher Pincher:

This year the Government has provided £10 million of additional funding to improve inspection capacity and capability on high-rise residential buildings. This is supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council to establish a new national infrastructure to support frontline protection work and the Fire and Rescue Services to conduct a Building Risk Review of all high rise residential buildings over 18m by the end of 2021.

Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and we expect remedial works to progress at pace. Remediation works to remove and replace unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems have either completed or started on over 70 per cent of all identified high rise residential buildings. We have made clear that we expect the rest to have started work on site before the end of the year and for all to have completed by the end of 2021.

Government has recognised that finance can be a barrier to remediation and has made significant funds available to speed up the remediation of buildings while protecting leaseholders from significant costs. For the remediation of unsafe non-ACM cladding we have made £1 billion available to fund the removal of unsafe non-ACM cladding in 2020/21. This is in addition to the £600 million made available already to ensure the remediation of unsafe ACM cladding. Government funding is not and should not be the only source of funds and for over half of private residential

buildings with ACM claddings, the ACM remediation is being funded from other sources without falling to leaseholders to pay.

The Building Safety Programme Monthly Data Release includes an appendix on ACM remediation in local authority areas. The latest data release, covering the period up to the end of July was published on 13 August and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-july-2020>.

■ Local Government Finance

Helen Hayes:

[77723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities financially ahead of the 2020 spending review.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government recognises the pressures councils face from Covid-19. We are providing councils with an unprecedented package of support, allocating £4.3 billion for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of unringfenced grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund.

Overall, Government has committed nearly £28 billion to support councils, their communities and businesses deal with the pandemic. This is on top of a core spending power increase of £2.9 billion in 2020/21, an estimated 4.4 per cent real terms increase

The Spending Review, later this year, will be the appropriate time to look at funding for local government in the round, and we will communicate our plans as early as we can through the provisional settlement for 2021/22. We will continue to engage councils on the best approach to the next financial year and work together to ensure they are managing as the pandemic progresses

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[77721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number and proportion of local authorities that may have to issue s114 notices during the covid-19 outbreak; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that matter on the effectiveness of the local response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We have now made £4.3 billion available to local authorities, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund and, on 2 July, the Government announced a comprehensive package of support. This included a co-payment mechanism for irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income, a phased repayment of Collection Fund deficits over the next 3 years, and a commitment to set out support for local authorities for irrecoverable tax income at the Spending Review.

We recognise that even with the considerable support already provided, there will be individual authorities with either unique circumstances or residual issues resulting in unmanageable pressures. The Department continues to engage regularly with the local government sector, which includes our ongoing financial monitoring survey and direct contact with councils and their representatives, local Leaders and Chief Executives.

If the Section 151 officer of a council judges that the council is unable to set or maintain a balanced budget, they must consider the possibility of a Section 114 notice. We have worked closely with CIPFA who have temporarily amended their guidance on the use of Section 114 notices to encourage local authorities to make contact with the Department in the first instance to advise of any immediate financial concerns.

We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on local government and would ask that any local authority who is faced with an unmanageable pressure or is concerned about their future financial position should approach MHCLG for discussion.

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[77743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to allocate funding to local authorities to (a) meet losses in income from rents and other commercial payments and (b) reimburse losses arising from outsourced leisure contracts during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

On 2 July, the Government announced a co-payment scheme to compensate local councils for relevant, unforeseen sales, fees and charges losses that are irrecoverable. Councils will absorb the first 5 per cent of all relevant, irrecoverable losses compared to budgets, with government compensating councils for 75p in every pound of loss thereafter.

This scheme is designed to compensate for transactional income losses that are truly irrecoverable. This will include transactional income from customer and client receipts which are generated from the delivery of goods and services and which were budgeted for in 2020/21, including leisure centres, but excluding rents and commercial investment income.

Commercial income losses are more complicated in nature, and the Government recognises that there are a complex set of variables relating to commercial income sources including recoverability.

We are also aware of instances where councils are currently experiencing cost pressures by supporting local services, such as leisure, which are delivered through contracted arrangements. We will continue to work with DCMS and councils over the coming weeks to ensure they are managing as the pandemic progresses. The Government stands ready to support any local authority with particular financial concerns.

Nadia Whittome:

[78938]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the additional funding requirements of local authorities that have a budget shortfall as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

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, we are providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, allocating £4.3 billion of support for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund. This direct financial support the Government has provided is just part of the comprehensive package of support which includes cashflow measures, support for the homeless, and bus and tram services, not to mention grants and business rates reliefs for businesses. In total, the Government has committed almost £28 billion to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities.

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.

Our new approach to financial support for councils in the fight against Covid-19 is more robust and longer-term, replacing both previous rounds of allocations. It shares the burden fairly between central and local government. We have reset the whole approach by estimating both expenditure pressures and income reductions through to the end of the financial year, based on what local authorities have told us in the latest financial monitoring and operational response. Over 99 per cent of local authorities responded to our May Covid-19 financial monitoring survey. We are extremely grateful for their continued collaboration, which enables us to understand pressures at a national and local level.

We will continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on local government and would ask that any local authority who is faced with an unmanageable pressure or is concerned about their future financial position should approach MHCLG to discuss.

■ Local Government Services: Coronavirus

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[77819]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the ability of local authorities to provide effective local authority services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

While MHCLG does not performance manage local government, we do consider the financial stability, leadership and service delivery of individual authorities as part of our oversight of local government. As such, we are providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, allocating £4.3 billion of support for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund.

Local Government: Coronavirus**John Spellar:**[\[76592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that emergency powers granted to local authorities during the covid-19 outbreak are not being used to avoid local consultation and opposition on planning decisions.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has made clear that local planning authorities should continue to prioritise decision-making during these challenging times to ensure that the planning system continues to function, especially when this will support the local economy. Local planning authorities are still required to undertake a formal period of public consultation of no less than 21 days, prior to deciding a planning application. Until the consultation period has closed the local planning authority may not determine the application.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings and Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 has introduced temporary regulations to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements. Local planning authorities (and applicants of EIA development under the Town and Country Planning Act) now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirements for site notices, neighbour notifications or newspaper publicity.

The Government has also introduced legislation to allow council committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period. The Planning Advisory Service has produced guidance for local planning authorities on how to adapt their planning services in response to Covid-19, including information on planning committees. These measures will ensure sufficient public participation in the planning process is maintained.

Private Rented Housing: Housing Benefit**Florence Eshalomi:**[\[78946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to tackle housing benefit discrimination in the private rented sector.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is clear that 'No DSS' requirements -- or any blanket ban on tenants on the basis that they are in receipt of benefits -- have no place in a modern housing market.

We noted the recent court judgement on this matter, and strongly encourage landlords and agents to look at all potential and existing tenants claiming housing benefit on an individual basis. We have engaged with the sector to encourage prevention of the practice of 'No DSS' restrictions. Last year major lettings portals Zoopla and Rightmove agreed to stop use of 'No DSS' adverts on their websites, and several major lenders agreed to remove restrictions on mortgages which prevented landlords from letting to tenants on benefits.

We have no plans at present to introduce legislation on this issue but are committed to bringing forward a Renters Reform Bill in due course, to deliver a better deal for renters, and a fairer and more effective rental market.

■ Property Development: Isle of Dogs**Apsana Begum:**[\[76904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his officials had with the Deputy Mayor for Planning in April 2016 on his decision to accept a £45 million benchmark land value for the Westferry Printworks site.

Apsana Begum:[\[76905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his officials had access to the market evidence that formed the basis of the London Deputy Mayor for Planning's decision in April 2016 to accept a £45 million benchmark land value for the Westferry Printworks site; and what assessment his Department made of the implications for his policies of the level of compliance of that decision with the guidance as set out in the Mayor of London's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance published in March 2016.

Apsana Begum:[\[76906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the £45 million benchmark land value for the Westferry Printworks site on the provision of affordable housing in (a) Tower Hamlets and (b) England.

Christopher Pincher:

The Secretary of State's conclusions on benchmark land value in relation to this site, and his assessment of the impacts on the provision of affordable housing are set out in full in the Inspector's Report of 20 November 2019 and his decision letter of 14 January.

Steve Reed:[\[77641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his oral answer to the hon. Member Lancaster and Fleetwood of 20 July

2020, Official Report, column 1828, on the Westferry Printworks scheme, if he will publish the (a) referenced advice from officials and (b) date on which that advice was provided.

Christopher Pincher:

All advice received by the Secretary of State from officials has been placed in the public domain, other than that subject to legal privilege. The relevant advice on timing is included within these documents and published on Gov.uk.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant of the Answer of 15 July 2020 to Questions 72267, 72268, 72269 and 72270 on Property Development: Isle of Dogs, what steps his Department took to assess and test the accuracy of the Viability Assessment for the Westferry Printworks planning proposal undertaken by the appellant.

Christopher Pincher:

The Secretary of State's full assessment of viability and affordable housing is set out in his Decision Letter of 14 January 2020 and the accompanying Inspector's Report.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department made of whether the Viability Assessment for the Westferry Printworks planning proposal submitted by the appellant took into account Northern & Shell's reported tax arrangements.

Christopher Pincher:

None.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department made of Northern & Shell's reported tax arrangements when considering the financial feasibility of the affordable housing element of Westferry Printworks planning proposal submitted by the appellant.

Christopher Pincher:

None.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to implement the lessons learned from the Westferry Printworks planning application to a future decision on the proposal.

Christopher Pincher:

Officials continually review procedures and guidance to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that lessons are learned and shared in future.

Apsana Begum:

[\[78885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to his oral contribution of 22 July 2020 to the Housing, Communities and Local

Government Committee, for what reason it was his policy on the Westferry housing scheme that it was a perfectly fair decision to try and get this done one way or another before the Community Infrastructure Levy charge came in.

Christopher Pincher:

It is in the interest of all parties that planning decisions are considered in a timely manner. The Westferry planning application came before Ministers following the failure of Tower Hamlets Council to determine it within their statutory deadline despite a number of opportunities to do so, including at a planning committee meeting which they cancelled owing to 'a lack of business', some 8 months after it was first submitted.

As the Secretary of State said before the Committee, Community Infrastructure Levy is a material planning consideration that a decision-maker may take into account in terms of the timing of their decision. Advice on timing is set out in the submission to the Secretary of State included within the published documents on gov.uk here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/westferry-printworks-letters-to-hclg-select-committee>.

■ **Public Lavatories: Coronavirus**

Tim Farron: [77550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which local authorities (a) have and (b) have not reopened public toilets as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Simon Clarke:

MHCLG does not collect this data.

Tim Farron: [77551]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what funding his Department has allocated to local authorities to reopen public toilets in compliance with covid-secure guidelines.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We have allocated £4.3 billion to local authorities so they can address the pressures they are facing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including £3.7 billion in unringfenced grant and the £600m Infection Control Fund. This unringfenced funding can be used to address local priorities, including reopening public toilets in compliance with covid-secure guidelines.

Tim Farron: [77553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to issue updated guidance to local authorities on the reopening of disabled toilets as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mr Simon Clarke:

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

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to configuration of toilets facilities to ensure they are kept clean, with social distancing achieved as far as possible and with best practice handwashing followed.

The impacts of measures on the disabled and other groups needs to be kept under consideration. Local authorities are subject to the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality duty will apply to decisions relating to these measures.

Mr Barry Sheerman:[\[78519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that public toilets are reopening safely and hygienically, in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Government has made clear through Covid-19 guidance that public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. This includes, for example, guidance on *Safer Public Places - Urban Centres and Green Spaces* and *Working safely during Coronavirus*.

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to configuration of toilets facilities to ensure they are kept clean, with social distancing achieved as far as possible and with best practice handwashing followed.

Suggested measures to help manage public toilets during Covid-19 include using signs to promote good hand hygiene, providing suitable handwashing and hand drying facilities, and increasing the frequency of cleaning facilities.

■ Social Rented Housing: Waiting Lists**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[78833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with local authorities on reducing social housing waiting lists.

Christopher Pincher:

The Localism Act 2011 gave local councils freedom to manage their own waiting lists, so they can decide who qualifies for social housing in their area providing they give reasonable preference (overall priority) to certain groups of people in housing need, including homeless households, people living in overcrowded housing, and those who have medical and welfare needs.

Since 2012, the social housing waiting list in England has reduced by 37 per cent.

■ Supported Housing: Regulation**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[76658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the efficacy of regulation to (a) protect tenant welfare, (c) ensure property suitability and (c) ensure adequate living standards of properties in the exempt accommodation sector.

Christopher Pincher:

The Social Housing Green Paper sets out our proposals to ensure that homes are safe and decent, that residents are treated with dignity and respect, and that we have the social housing we need for the future. Alongside this we conducted an in-depth review of the regulation of social housing to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose, reflects changes in the social housing sector and will support delivery of the Green Paper objectives. Building on the review of regulation and the Green Paper, the Social Housing White Paper will be published later this year.

As set out in my answer of 21 July 2020 to the Honourable Member for Ladywood (Questions: 75242, 75243 and 75244), whether or not accommodation is 'exempt' is a matter for local authority housing benefit departments. The Regulator of Social Housing regulates only those landlords that wish to register with it and who are able to meet its registration requirements (other than local authorities who own homes that are automatically registered). All housing must comply with housing health and safety and building regulations legislation, which is designed to ensure adequate living standards.

■ Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2020**Mike Amesbury:**[\[78849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department will publish an impact assessment for The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2020.

Mike Amesbury:[\[78850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department will publish the impact assessment for The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

Full Impact Assessments for both measures will be published in due course.

■ Towns Fund**Steve Reed:**[\[77642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference the National Audit Office report, Review of the Town Deals selection process, published 21 July 2020, what (a) criteria, (b) process and (c) sources of evidence his

Department used to assess and rank towns for purposes of allocating funding under the Towns Fund.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The selection process comprised two stages. The first was an initial assessment carried out by officials: scoring, ranking, filtering and prioritising of all 1,082 towns across England against a range of criteria; creating a framework for decision-making to support ministers to select towns. The second was ministers' selection of towns to be invited to develop proposals for Town Deals. More information can be found within the NAO Review of the Town Deals Selection Process (July 2020).

Steve Reed:

[\[77643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which Ministers were authorised to determine the towns that would receive funding from the Towns Fund.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The current Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and former Minister for the Northern Powerhouse were responsible for final decisions on which towns were selected. Ministers considered a range of factors in identifying and prioritising towns, including levels of deprivation and exposure to economic shocks.

■ **Towns Fund: Yorkshire and the Humber**

Naz Shah:

[\[78711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason funding was allocated from the Towns Fund to the low-priority towns of Brighouse, Morley, Stocksbridge and Todmorden.

Mr Simon Clarke:

All towns selected for Town Deals are in the more deprived half of towns in the UK, and the 40 highest priority towns were selected. Of those in the lower priority groups, there were specific reasons for inclusion based on local intelligence about both the challenges in those towns and the opportunity for transformational change. The different reasons for selecting Brighouse, Morley, Stocksbridge and Todmorden are listed in the NAO Review of the Town Deals Selection Process (July 2020).

■ **Travellers: Caravan Sites**

Robert Halfon:

[\[78620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his policy is on unauthorised encampments.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is clear that unauthorised encampments cause harm to the local environment and that the rights of settled residents must be respected.

Local authorities are best-placed to determine when it is appropriate to use their powers to evict unauthorised encampments under Sections 77 and 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) during the Covid-19 pandemic, and should work with the police and magistrates' courts in their local area.

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

Robert Halfon:

[78621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what powers are in place to prevent the development of unauthorised encampments.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government is clear that unauthorised encampments cause harm to the local environment and that the rights of settled residents must be respected. Local authorities have powers available to them to prevent the development of unauthorised encampments in their area.

Councils can apply to the Courts for pre-emptive injunctions which prevent unauthorised camping in a defined geographical area. Councils are also able to take early and decisive action by issuing Temporary Stop Notices against unauthorised development and encampments. Councils can issue such a notice on both private and public sector land.

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

■ Urban Areas: Finance

Sir John Hayes:

[78496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to increase investment in town centres.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Our town centres and high streets have an important role to play as we drive growth across the country; creating jobs, nurturing small businesses and injecting billions of pounds into our economy.

Our £3.6 billion Towns Fund is key to delivering this, and through the Future High Streets Fund and Town Deals we will drive the economic regeneration of our high streets and towns centres to provide long term economic growth and improved productivity across the country.

■ Visual Impairment: Social Distancing

Alex Norris:

[78840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support people living with eye conditions to access (a) essential items, (b) outdoor spaces and (c) shops while social distancing.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Covid-19 Secure: Safer Public Places - Urban Centres and Green Spaces guidance provides owners and operators with a framework to support social distancing in public places. This guidance reminds owners and operators of public spaces to consider the particular needs of those with protected characteristics such as visually impaired blind and partially sighted people. This is in addition to employers' existing responsibilities under employment and equalities legislation.

Businesses and operators of the public realm, therefore, need to bear in mind the particular needs of different groups or individuals and make sure that the steps they take to address the risk of Covid-19 do not have a disproportionate impact on some groups.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

■ CDC: Investment

Navendu Mishra:

[78897]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what investments the CDC Group has made since 2010.

James Duddridge:

CDC invests to achieve two key objectives: To support the business growth that lifts people out of poverty, and to make a financial return, which CDC then reinvests to improve the lives of people in Africa and South Asia. CDC have only made new commitments in Africa and South Asia since 2012. At the end of 2019, CDC had invested in 1,228 businesses - 690 in Africa and 377 in South Asia. In 2019, CDC made £1.66 billion of new commitments and increased its portfolio to £4.7 billion.

CDC publishes a full list of its new investment commitments each year in its Annual Reviews (2010 - present) which can be accessed online at www.cdcgroup.com/en/.

Navendu Mishra:

[78898]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of CDC Group investments in luxury brands and hotel chains with its mission statement to make a lasting difference to people's lives in some of the world's poorest places.

James Duddridge:

All of CDC's investments undergo a comprehensive and systematic assessment of their expected development impact using internationally recognised best practice

methods. A team of over 60 development specialists work to ensure that each investment brings about a positive economic, social and environmental change in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

CDC invests to support the growth of companies that create employment and help transform economies, through the goods and services they produce and sell and the local taxes they generate. In 2019, CDC invested in businesses in Africa and South Asia that employed 875,790; generated 57 terawatt hours of electricity; and its agricultural investments sourced from 1.84 million farmers.

Africa needs increased economic infrastructure to unlock its full economic potential and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. CDC's primary aim when investing into the hotel sector is to create more and better jobs in countries that desperately need them. In addition, these investments support both local and national economic growth. For example, by purchasing goods and services from local suppliers, and by improving economic infrastructure.

Information about CDC's approach to assessing and monitoring the development impact of its investments is available on its website.

■ CDC: ONOMO Hotels

Navendu Mishra:

[\[78896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding the CDC Group has invested in ONOMO Hotels to date.

James Duddridge:

CDC has made investment commitments to ONOMO Hotels of £41 million.

CDC's investment in ONOMO is creating jobs and stability in some of the world's most challenged countries including: Mali, Togo, Guinea, Cameroon and Cote D'Ivoire. Since the investment the company has created around 250 new permanent jobs.

CDC's investment also benefits the local economy. For example, as ONOMO now has the capital to expand it was able to employ around 750 construction workers as it added to its sites in 2019. In addition, it purchases around £11 million's worth of locally sourced goods each year - helping create demand for local suppliers.

As with every CDC investment, it has been made with high Environmental, Social and Governance Standards in mind. CDC is working with the company to reduce energy and water use and ensure its new hotels are built using green design and construction.

■ CDC: Private Equity

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[76091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much the CDC Group has invested via private equity funds in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

CDCs invests through Private Equity Funds to provide growth capital to companies in Africa and South Asia to create jobs and transform economies, focussing on the small and mid-size companies that face the biggest financing gap.

CDC's backing for Fund managers helps promote the adoption of higher Environmental, Social and Governance standards and support the development of self-sustaining local finance markets.

In the last five years CDC made new investment commitments to private equity funds of:

- 2015 - £238m
- 2016 - £289m
- 2017 - £273m
- 2018 - £311m
- 2019 - £284m.

■ CDC: Wonderchef**Navendu Mishra:**[\[78894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much funding the CDC Group has invested in Wonderchef to date.

James Duddridge:

CDC's investment into Wonderchef is supporting economic activity for thousands of women who participate in its direct-to-home sales network. Since CDC's investment was made in 2018, the company has also created around 350 direct jobs, with the number of female employees more than doubling in that time. In addition, the company has increased local sourcing of its products helping deliver impact through its supply chain.

This investment was made through a private equity fund managed by Amicus Capital Partners. CDC's partnership model with Fund managers helps it achieve impact at scale by supporting hundreds of SMEs across South Asia and Africa. In addition to backing local teams of investors, and equipping them with strong Environmental, Social and Governance practices, the model helps support the development of self-sustaining local finance markets.

CDC publishes the amounts it invests directly into businesses and investment funds on its website www.cdcgroup.com. Individual investment amounts made by its partners are not disclosed as this information is commercially sensitive.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Fleur Anderson:**[\[78870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how many (a) people have been advised on the importance of hygiene and (b) products have been distributed

through the Hygiene, Handwashing and Behaviour Change covid-19 response programme.

Wendy Morton:

The Hygiene, Handwashing and Behaviour Change Coalition for COVID-19 response programme aims to reach up to 1 billion people with hygiene messaging to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implementation is underway with 21 partners working across 37 countries. While totals have still to be verified, for Phase 1 partners alone, we are on track to reach over 300 million of the most vulnerable across countries including the DRC, Bangladesh, Yemen and Ethiopia, including in refugee settings.

Over 20 million hygiene products have already been delivered to frontline NGOs, with 60 million more being prepared for distribution by Unilever.

■ **Coronavirus: Research**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[78807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her priorities are for the GAVI board meeting to discuss the COVAX facility.

Wendy Morton:

As GAVI's largest donor, the UK is proud of the impressive results GAVI has achieved in vaccinating over 760 million children, and saving 13 million lives since 2000.

As the world grapples with the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK has been clear that the equitable global distribution of a vaccine will be the best defence against it, enable collective recovery, and reduce the risk of repeat outbreaks. We therefore strongly support Gavi using its expertise and experience to lead on accelerating global access to COVID-19 vaccines via the COVAX Facility.

The UK was represented by two senior DFID officials at the GAVI Board, where the priority is to ensure that the COVAX Advance Market Commitment delivers timely and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in the poorest countries.

The UK's overarching priority for its £1.65 billion contribution to Gavi from 2021-25 is to maintain and improve routine immunisation against vaccine preventable diseases in the poorest countries.

■ **Department for International Development : Contracts**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[77761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department (a) has renegotiated or (b) plans to renegotiate contracts at a reduced value to account for a potential reduction in the Official Development Assistance budget.

Wendy Morton:

The UK's 0.7 per cent Gross National Income target is directly linked to the performance of the UK economy. Like all other Government Departments, we need to make some tough prioritisation choices which will likely include the renegotiation of some of our contracts in light of the expected drop in GNI. In doing so, we will ensure that renegotiated contracts continue to deliver value for money for UK taxpayers and maximum impact for beneficiaries.

■ Department for International Development: Procurement**Sarah Champion:**[\[77635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has been made of the financial sustainability of her Department's (a) major and (b) SME suppliers; how many of those suppliers have been classified as at financial risk; and whether her Department has taken steps to support individual suppliers that are at risk.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office is actively monitoring and assessing the overall financial health of our supply partners to understand the impact of the global economic downturn and Covid-19 on our supplier base and identify supply partners who are at higher financial risk.

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office relies heavily on the capacity, expertise, resilience and flexibility of our supply partners large and small, without them we cannot deliver UK aid. A generous package of support has been made available by the Chancellor for UK businesses, including supplier relief for those in the aid sector. DFID has worked with SMEs and major supply partners to find pragmatic and flexible ways to maintain delivery of essential programmes, including amendments to payment schedules, delivery milestones and alternative working arrangements where appropriate.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[76829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much her Department has disbursed to multilateral institutions in response to the covid-19 pandemic; and how much of that aid has reached the Global South to date.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is playing a leading role in the international response to the Covid-19 pandemic, pledging up to £774 million of UK aid to help developing countries (the 'global south') address the immediate and longer-term impacts of the crisis. Of the £774 million, £220 million has gone to UN agencies in the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), such as the World Food Programme and UN Refugee Agency, as well as humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross and international NGOs. DFID is also adapting its programmes across its country network to respond to COVID-19 and address the needs of the most vulnerable, as outlined in

the GHRP. This funding will help address urgent needs in vulnerable countries, accelerate progress towards a vaccine, reinforce infection control and help the poorest countries address the economic impact of the crisis.

On 4 June, the UK hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, where world leaders, foundations, corporations and organisations pledged \$8.8 billion for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The UK remains Gavi's largest donor, having pledged £1.65bn for 2021-25 to help strengthen health systems in the global fight against COVID-19 and immunise a further 300 million children in the world's poorest countries against other deadly diseases. We are a leading donor and shareholder to the multilateral development banks, which have announced financial packages totalling more than £200bn. Given the unprecedented high demand for rapid finance, the UK has doubled its pledge from £2.2bn to £4.4 billion to IMF loan resources for concessional lending to low-income and vulnerable developing countries, and pledged up to £150m to the IMF Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust for the poorest countries to receive debt relief on IMF repayments.

We will continue to work closely with our multilateral partners and fora such as the G7 and G20 to galvanise the global fight against Covid-19 and shape the multilateral response to ensure it addresses the needs of the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

■ Developing Countries: Money Laundering

Sarah Champion:

[\[77639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to take steps to help strengthen rules to prevent the movement of money from corruption (a) leaving and (b) entering developing countries.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is at the forefront of efforts to prevent the proceeds of corruption from developing countries being laundered or transferred overseas. The Government supports developing countries to improve rules and capabilities directly through a range of regional and in-country programming, such as the Countering Illicit Financial Flows Programme in Southern Africa. The UK also supports highly respected global programmes that seek to help developing countries implement international standards, such as the International Centre for Asset Recovery based in Basel and the World Bank-UNODC Stolen Asset Recovery (STAR) Fund. And, through its wider international engagement, the UK influences the evolution of global rules and norms, for example championing the adoption of beneficial ownership transparency standards.

The Government's future plans for tackling the proceeds of corruption from developing countries will be based on existing strategies such as the UK Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2022 and the National Economic Crime Plan 2019-2022, as

well as the priorities set in the ongoing Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and subsequent Spending Review.

■ **Developing Countries: Nutrition**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[78805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, when the Government plans to make its pledge of funding for Nutrition for Growth post-2020.

Wendy Morton:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to PQ 74465 on 22/07/2020.

■ **Developing Countries: Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[77744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect on local partners in the global south of a reduction in the UK's official development assistance budget.

Wendy Morton:

Local partners are fundamental to the UK's delivery of ODA being effective and impactful. This is particularly demonstrated through their knowledge, partnerships and agility. Ministers reviewed every strand of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure we can maintain operational capacity.

Prioritisation decisions in DFID were made at the project level and considered various criteria such as: how programmes contribute to development impact; value for money; national interest; the impact on suppliers and supply chains - including local partners; and to what extent we could feasibly save money from a specific project. Bilateral projects were also assessed against the vulnerability of each country.

■ **East Africa: World Food Programme**

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[78491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will allocate additional funding to the World Food Programme to enable it to increase assistance to East African countries; and if she will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned about the food security situation in East Africa, where nearly 25 million people are at crisis levels of food insecurity. Existing humanitarian need will be exacerbated by climate change, the desert locust outbreak and the impact of Covid-19.

The UK is working across East Africa to provide life-saving assistance, cash transfers where markets are still functioning, and tools and seeds to build a longer-term ability to respond to shocks. We are working through both our country programming and multilateral responses, which includes through the World Food Programme (WFP). In 2019, DFID has provided almost USD 700million to support WFP's operations. In

2020, our contribution so far is USD 254million (this includes a USD 19million contribution to WFP's global services in response to Covid-19).

■ Ethiopia: Food Supply

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[78490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the food security situation in Ethiopia; and if she will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

The worsening food security situation in Ethiopia is a significant concern. Ethiopia faces the triple threat of drought and floods, the worst desert locust outbreak in generations, and Covid-19. The UN and GoE estimate that 15 million people will be in need of humanitarian food assistance in the coming months and over 4 million children and mothers will face acute malnutrition as the full impacts of the triple-threat crisis materialise. The UK is a committed partner to the Government of Ethiopia and is supporting food and nutrition responses for the most vulnerable people. The UK recently announced £17 million for the East Africa desert locust response, bringing our total contribution up to £25 million.

■ Europe: Undocumented Migrants

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to the (a) Maltese and (b) Italian authorities to help deter and prevent boats carrying illegal migrants from reaching Europe.

James Cleverly:

The UK and Italy have a regular dialogue on migration and last met in February 2020. The UK and Malta signed a bilateral MoU on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in December 2018, and a UK-Malta Migration dialogue took place on 27 July led by the UK's Migration and Modern Slavery Envoy.

The UK Government has a comprehensive whole-of-route approach to global migration, working in countries of origin and transit to address the drivers of migration, reduce the need of migrants to leave their home country or to enable migrants to stay in a safe third country where possible. This whole of route approach is the only way to achieve long-term and sustainable reductions in irregular migration.

■ Food Poverty: Overseas Aid

Sarah Champion:

[\[78679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with G20 colleagues on the (a) funding and (b) distribution of emergency cash transfers to tackle malnutrition.

Wendy Morton:

Prevention and treatment of malnutrition remains a priority for the UK as part of our commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children, particularly as countries face worsening levels of malnutrition in the face of COVID-19.

In April the UK worked closely with other G20 members to agree a statement of the G20 Agriculture Ministers committing to close cooperation and action to safeguard global food security and nutrition. This included the commitment to work together to help ensure that sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food continues to be available and accessible to all people.

Food: Coronavirus**Sarah Champion:**[\[78678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on levels of hunger across the globe; and what steps she is taking to prevent hunger levels rising.

Wendy Morton:

The current combination of multiple crises could lead to a major food security crisis and even famine, triggered or made worse by COVID-19. Many countries are already experiencing severe food insecurity - due to conflict, climate change, shocks such as locusts, and poor economic performance. There is increasing evidence that COVID-19 is making this worse and may drive new hunger hotspots.

We know the situation is worsening. To prevent the food security crisis from skyrocketing, the international community will need to step up. DFID is playing its part. We are tracking the situation closely and our humanitarian assistance programmes help ensure we can get life-saving support to those who need it the most. We are adapting programmes in agriculture, nutrition and food security, to build resilience and prepare the ground for a sustainable recovery.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[77756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2020 to Question 71769, if she will list the (a) NGOs and (b) other stakeholders that have been consulted on the merger of her Department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Wendy Morton:

As with any government change of this nature, the announcement came first to Parliament. The Government will continue its ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, including on issues relating to the merger. Plans on how we will do this with different partners will be shared in due course.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[77757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what the Government's timescale is for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office becoming fully operational.

Wendy Morton:

Following the announcement on 16 June of the Prime Minister's decision to merge the FCO and DFID work began immediately on creating the new department, which will be formally established in early September. The process of fully integrating DFID and FCO's operations in the UK and overseas will be developed and delivered through a phased transformation programme.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Conditions of Employment**

Sarah Champion:

[\[77634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the job security of staff in her Department at grade A2/G7 and above who were appointed in country (SAIC); whether the additional Foreign and Commonwealth Office vetting procedures will affect that job security; and whether the employment protections afforded to those staff will be extended to EU citizens working in her Department.

Wendy Morton:

There will be no compulsory redundancies for DFID employees as a result of the decision to create a new Department. Some roles may change due to business needs and any changes will be handled in compliance with relevant civil service policy and guidance or local labour law for staff appointed in country overseas.

■ **Ghana: Corruption**

Sarah Champion:

[\[77640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to support (a) Ghana in-country programmes to prevent (i) corruption and (ii) laundering of proceeds from corruption and (b) other country-specific corruption strategies.

James Duddridge:

DFID Ghana is currently implementing an anti-corruption programme - Strengthening Action Against Corruption (STAAC). The programme engages with law enforcement agencies and policy makers to strengthen the Government of Ghana's capacity to detect, investigate and prosecute corruption, as well as supporting civil society to hold government to account. This programme supported a Parliamentary Act in Ghana that established the Office of the Special Prosecutor, which has independent powers to make inquiries into corruption and bribery, and has helped strengthen investigative systems in the Financial Intelligence Centre. It is also supporting Ghana to implement an effective action plan, after it was grey-listed by the Financial Action

Task Force in October 2018, including drafting of a new Anti-Money Laundering Bill and development of a beneficial ownership register.

There is strong coordination among HMG departments on tackling corruption and Serious Organised Crime (SOC) in Ghana. Under the FCDO, a new successor programme will be designed to tackle corruption and organised crime, both of which remain top UK Government priorities. In particular, it will seek to establish UK-Ghana partnerships to tackle illicit financial flows and provide asset-tracing and recovery of the proceeds of crime. Under the FCDO, a refreshed anti-corruption strategy will also be developed.

■ **Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

Christine Jardine:

[\[78832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to ensure the Global Fund's allocation of resources in response to the covid-19 pandemic does not effect resources for (a) HIV, (b) TB and (c) malaria.

Wendy Morton:

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has provided up to US \$1 billion to help countries fight COVID-19, mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB and malaria programmes, and support and strengthen health systems. This funding comes from savings from the fifth replenishment of the Global Fund (2017-2019). All of the funding from the sixth replenishment (2020-2022) will be used to fund programmes to fight HIV, TB and malaria and support and strengthen health systems.

The UK is proud to be the second biggest donor to the fifth and sixth replenishments of the Global Fund.

■ **Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[77758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Answer of 20 July to Question 73967, when the Government will begin targeted engagement with stakeholders on the Integrated Review, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review.

Wendy Morton:

The Government continues to ensure that some of the best minds in the UK and beyond are feeding into the Review's conclusions.

We have started targeted engagement with academic stakeholders and will engage more widely still in the coming weeks; including with Parliament, Devolved Administrations, civil society, and our allies and partners. The Government has also now issued a Call for Evidence to help inform the Integrated Review. This will facilitate contributions from the public and our stakeholders with an interest and role in our nation's security and prosperity, and in tackling the global challenges the UK will face over the coming years.

■ Israel: Palestinians**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[77538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 73751 on Israel: Palestinians, for what reason the UK's People-to-People programme ended without alternative provision being established to help ensure continued UK support for co-existence projects in Israel-Palestine.

James Cleverly:

As the Chancellor has set out, like many other nations across the world the UK is experiencing a severe economic downturn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the likely decrease in the size of the economy this year, the First Secretary chaired a review process across government looking at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process also has made sure there is continued support for five ODA priorities; bottom billion poverty reduction, climate change, girls' education, Covid-19 and Britain as a force for good.

All ODA spending Departments will now work with respective partners to make these savings in a responsible and efficient way.

■ Overseas Aid**Sarah Champion:**[\[77632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has been made of the potential level of reductions in non-urgent funding to the UN and other multilateral or regional institutions; and whether those reductions will be fully implemented before reductions in funding for bilateral and existing programming are made.

Wendy Morton:

As the Chancellor has set out, like many other nations across the world the UK is experiencing a severe economic downturn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the likely decrease in the size of the economy this year, the First Secretary chaired a review process across government looking at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process also has made sure there is continued support for five ODA priorities; bottom billion poverty reduction, climate change, girls' education, Covid-19 and Britain as a force for good.

All ODA spending Departments will now work with respective partners to make these savings in a responsible and efficient way.

Dr Lisa Cameron:[\[77675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has to bring forward a new UK Aid Strategy.

Wendy Morton:

The Integrated Review, announced by the Prime Minister and expected to conclude later in the year, will define the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world. Its outcomes will shape the objectives including for overseas development spending.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[77763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues, (b) multilateral donor partners, (c) civil society organisations and (d) other stakeholders on (i) the potential reduction in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget and (ii) governmental prioritisation of ODA spending.

Wendy Morton:

The International Development Secretary has had ongoing discussion with key stakeholders during the review of ODA spending in 2020. She has worked with Cabinet colleagues throughout the HMG review to identify savings in this year's ODA budget. This involved participating in the meetings chaired by the First Secretary of State to oversee the review, and contributing to the final session of the review with the First Secretary of State and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. She wrote to all DFID private sector and civil society suppliers in May and published a statement on 1 June announcing that DFID would have to pause any new work given the GNI context. Following the outcome of the ODA savings exercise, the First Secretary of State has written to key suppliers to inform them about the outcome. This has been published on DFID's supplier portal, making it available to all DFID's suppliers. Regular and structured engagement was put in place with leading NGOs and CSOs, led by Baroness Sugg and DFID Permanent Secretary Nick Dyer to discuss prioritisation of aid spending during the review. A recent meeting with a number of CSOs took place on the 24 July, led by Baroness Sugg, which covered the conclusions of the review process.

Fleur Anderson:[\[78869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much of the £50 million in funding from her Department matched with funding from Unilever, has been disbursed to date.

Wendy Morton:

As at July 2020, the Department for International Development has disbursed £15,958,394 through the Hygiene, Handwashing & Behaviour Change Coalition for COVID-19 Response.

This relates to 14 contracts and Memoranda of Understandings with implementing partners, with a total value of £34,806,976.

Additional contracts are currently being negotiated.

■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

Sarah Champion:

[\[78681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps the Government is taking along with other G20 countries to ensure that the G20 covid-19 action plan includes a dedicated strategy for economic recovery in countries affected by fragility, crisis, and displacement.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is committed to supporting vulnerable countries suffering from the economic, financial and social impacts of Covid-19 including countries affected by crisis, conflict and displacement.

The UK played a leading role in the development of the G20 Action Plan supporting the global economy through Covid-19, ensuring the Plan has clear commitments to help the poorest countries. This includes the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, which saw G20 members suspend debt service payments for the poorest, and most vulnerable, countries until at least the end of 2020.

We continue to work closely with G20 members to ensure robust implementation of the Action Plan

■ Overseas Aid: Payments

Sarah Champion:

[\[78680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will maintain her Department's commitment to more than double its use of cash and vouchers by 2025 to 32 per cent.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a leading supporter of cash in humanitarian response as an effective, efficient, and accountable way of helping people affected by crisis meet a range of basic needs. A considerable proportion of our humanitarian assistance is currently delivered as cash (and vouchers) as per the UK Government's commitment at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The UK also co-convenes the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream with the World Food Programme.

As the Prime Minister has set out, the UK is committed to spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on development. We continue to look at how this money can be spent most effectively in our national interest including through the Integrated Review, which will report in the Autumn and inform the new department's priorities.

■ Overseas Aid: Standards

Sarah Champion:

[\[77636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether it is the Government's policy to maintain the Programme Quality Index after the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth Office in September 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The Portfolio Quality Index will continue to be calculated, however, is just one of the tools DFID used to assess the performance of programmes.

Achieving value for money has always been a core objective of all spend on Official Development Assistance. The Prime Minister was clear in his statement to the house on 16th June that delivering maximum value for the British taxpayer will continue to be a key objective of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Agreement On Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability****Geraint Davies:**[\[77494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) her international counterparts on the UK signing the proposed Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability.

Greg Hands:

Having left the EU, the UK has a unique opportunity to design a set of policies to tackle climate change and environmental improvement tailored to the needs and high ambition of the country. We are exploring trade policy options to support ambitious action on climate change, including the policy options set out as part of the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS) negotiations.

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[76724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has granted arms sales open licences to Saudi Arabia which include dual-use weaponry.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[76725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what licences for the sale of artillery and associated targeting equipment the Government has granted to Saudi Arabia in the last five years.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[76726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what (a) amount and (b) type of (i) arms and (ii) equipment have been sold to Saudi Arabia under open licences since March 2015.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[76727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what (a) volume and (b) type of arms and equipment have been sold to Saudi Arabia through open licences since March 2015.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK and these reports contain detailed information, including the overall value, the type (e.g. Military, Other), and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

This information is available at: gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data and the most recent publication was on 14th July 2020, covering the period 1st January to 31st March 2020.

HM Government does not hold complete records on the amount of equipment sold to Saudi Arabia – nor any other country – and this can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Owen Thompson:[\[76789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government plans to publish the review upon which it based its decision to resume arms exports to Saudi Arabia in July 2020.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The review contains confidential and sensitive information so, for national security reasons, HM Government has no plans to publish it.

Emily Thornberry:[\[78564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the licence granted in June 2019 for the export of a £200 air cooler for an armoured vehicle to the Royal Saudi Land Forces was officially approved by a Minister of her Department.

Emily Thornberry:[\[78565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the licence granted in July 2019 for the export of 260 military radio parts, valued at £435,450, to the Royal Saudi Land Forces was officially approved by a Minister of her Department.

Emily Thornberry:[\[78566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the licence granted on 13 August 2019 authorising a contract to repair equipment used by the Royal Saudi Land Forces to detect improvised explosive devices was officially approved by a Minister of her Department.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer the Rt. Hon. Lady to the already published report of the Independent Investigation into Export Licences for Saudi Arabia Issued in Breach of Court Undertaking, which was placed in the Library of the House on 6th February 2020.

■ Biodiversity

Geraint Davies:

[\[77492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that her policies protect biodiversity.

Greg Hands:

HM Government is clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of the environment. We are committed to supporting the UK's climate and environmental objectives, including the protection of biodiversity.

HM Government has underscored the environment as one of the three priorities for UK leadership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and we are exploring all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements to ensure we uphold the UK's high environmental standards.

We are also working to build a coalition of countries committed to sustainable trade to help limit deforestation, as part of the UK's COP26 Presidency, and to consider other measures to support biodiversity and sustainable supply chains, particularly for forest-risk commodities.

■ Department for International Trade: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[78607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 63293 on Department for International Trade: Overseas Aid, if she will publish the programmes managed by her Department that are (a) recorded as Official Development Assistance and (b) prioritise support for women and girls.

Greg Hands:

The Department's only Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme is the Investment Promotion Programme (IPP). In line with the Government's transparency commitments, we will publish the full business case once finalised. This ODA programme is expected to support increased job opportunities and incomes for women and men in selected countries.

■ Exports: Fuel Cells

Chi Onwurah:

[\[77613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to support UK fuel cell manufacturers export their products.

Graham Stuart:

Since its inception, the Department for International Trade (DIT) has undertaken a range of promotion activities to support exports from the renewable energy sector. DIT has a dedicated team that supports renewable energy businesses, including those exporting fuel cell technologies where the UK has world-leading capability.

In 2018, low carbon and renewable energy exports reached £5.3 billion.

■ Felixstowe Port: A14

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[78610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has held with the Secretary of State for Transport on upgrading the A14 in Suffolk to enhance the route for transport between the port of Felixstowe and the areas incorporating the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse schemes.

Graham Stuart:

The Secretary of State for International Trade has had no formal discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on this matter.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[78611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the strategic importance of upgrading the A14 in Suffolk to (a) enhance the route for transport between the port of Felixstowe and the areas incorporating the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse schemes and (b) contribute to the delivery of the UK's (i) economic and (ii) trade strategies after the end of the transition period.

Graham Stuart:

No assessment has been made by DIT of the strategic importance of upgrading the A14 in Suffolk.

■ Imports: Motor Vehicles

Lilian Greenwood: [\[77584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect on pedestrian and cyclist safety of the differences in vehicle safety standards between vehicles produced in (a) the USA and (b) the EU; and what safety standard vehicles will have to meet for import to the UK after the transition period.

Graham Stuart:

The Department has considered the differences in the technical standards designed to provide protection for both vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, and vehicle occupants in the USA and UK.

In the UK, new passenger cars and light goods vehicles must meet minimum levels of protection for pedestrian leg and head impacts.

Vehicles operating on British roads must adhere to British safety standards.

■ Internet: USA

Chris Elmore: [\[78796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what meetings she has had with representatives from (a) Facebook and (b) the Internet Association in which Section 230 of the US Communications Decency Act 1996 was discussed; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State has had no meetings with representatives from Facebook and the Internet Association.

Strategic Trade Advisory Group**Geraint Davies:**[\[77498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the next meeting date of the Strategic Trade Advisory Group.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Strategic Trade Advisory Group (STAG) is currently under review, ahead of a new 24 month term of appointment. My Department will make the dates and times of meetings, the agendas and a high-level summary of the discussion available following each meeting of the STAG.

Tidal Power**Geraint Davies:**[\[77499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on support for the development and export of tidal technology.

Graham Stuart:

The Secretary of State has had no discussions with other Cabinet colleagues on this matter.

Trade Agreements: Conditions of Employment**Geraint Davies:**[\[78469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with UK trade partners on maintaining International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government shares the high regard of the British people for worker protections and has made clear that we will not compromise on these.

Whilst the precise details of any British free trade agreement are a matter for formal negotiations and we would not seek to pre-empt these discussions, we are exploring all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements, including possible labour provisions, to make sure that future trade upholds Britain's own high standards and our international obligations.

Trade Agreements: Motor Vehicles**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[76671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress has been made in negotiations on free trade agreements covering the automotive sector with (a) the US and (b) Australia.

Greg Hands:

The third UK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement negotiating round took place from 27 July to 7 August 2020. Positive progress continues to be made.

Further talks will be held between the third and fourth negotiating round, which is expected to take place in early September.

Trade negotiators from the UK and Australia held the first round of negotiations for a UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement from 29 June to 10 July 2020, through virtual means.

Discussions between negotiators were productive and reflected our shared ambition to secure a comprehensive deal to boost trade and investment between our like-minded economies.

Teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed a forward plan for future talks. Our positive discussions in round one have laid the groundwork for the UK and Australia to achieve high-quality outcomes across the agreement.

Lilian Greenwood:[\[76672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) the US and (b) Australia on vehicle safety standards during negotiations on free trade agreements.

Greg Hands:

Both Britain and Australia are signatories of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) 1958 agreement. This allows automotive manufacturers to export to the Australian market with relative ease, as type approval certificates issued in the UK are accepted by Australia without the need for additional testing.

With the US, negotiators are seeking to reduce technical barriers to trade by removing and preventing trade-restrictive measures in goods markets overall, while upholding the safety and quality of all products on the British market and promoting the use of international standards, to further facilitate trade between the parties. Britain hopes to reduce regulatory obstacles faced when exporting to the US, facilitate market access for British businesses and investors, and improve trade flows by ensuring a transparent, predictable, and stable regulatory framework to give confidence and stability to British exporting businesses and investors.

Lilian Greenwood:[\[76673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will take steps to ensure that vehicles that do not meet current UK vehicle safety standards would not be permitted to be (a) sold and (b) registered in the UK as a result of an international free trade agreement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Vehicles that do not meet British regulations are not permitted to use British roads. There are no plans to change this.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Chris Elmore:

[\[78797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the compatibility of the proposed UK-US trade deal with the UK Government's proposed legislation on online harms; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

HM Government is committed to making the United Kingdom the safest place in the world to be online and the best place to start and grow a digital business. The Department for International Trade is working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to carefully consider any interaction between trade policy and Online Harms policy in future trade agreements. I can confirm that HM Government stands by our Online Harms commitment, and nothing in the US trade deal will affect that.

■ World Health Organisation: Dispute Resolution

Geraint Davies:

[\[77493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with her US counterpart on reforms to the World Trade Organisation disputes resolution process.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State engages regularly with the US Trade Representative on World Trade Organisation (WTO) reform, amongst other trade interests.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting the multilateral trading system. A two-stage, impartial, binding and compulsory dispute settlement system is crucial in ensuring that we can enforce the rules we have negotiated.

We have listened carefully to the concerns raised about the Appellate Body and stand ready to engage in further discussions on potential solutions, including reforms to the

system, with our US counterparts and other international partners.

JUSTICE

■ Community Rehabilitation Companies: Coronavirus

Grahame Morris:

[\[78615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance his Department issued to community rehabilitation companies on the development of exceptional delivery models in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Grahame Morris:

[\[78616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an assessment made of the ability of community rehabilitation companies to support (a) home-working and (b) video conferencing during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Lucy Frazer:

From 23 March 2020, all Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) have been operating an Exceptional Delivery Model (EDM) in accordance with Government advice and guidance on social distancing measures to help stem the rise of the COVID infection rate. The pandemic has faced the department and the CRCs with an unprecedented challenge, and the EDMs have been regularly subjected to robust assurance and management to ensure that the CRCs prioritise their higher risk cases, at the higher end of the Medium-Low risk scale, and to continue to protect the public.

CRCs and their staff continue to deliver vital front-line probation services to the service users in their care and have access to laptops and mobile phones to enable them to work from home. As part of the EDMs, CRCs have also put in place staff rotas for Offender Managers/Responsible Officers to attend prisons and visit their cohorts of offenders safely and in line with social distancing guidelines.

■ **Community Rehabilitation Companies: Staff**

Grahame Morris:

[\[78613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to offer all employees of community rehabilitation companies new roles on at least equivalent terms and conditions in the National Probation Service before private probation contracts end in June 2021.

Lucy Frazer:

HMPPS is in the process of agreeing with Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) detailed plans for staff transfer activity, including which staff from CRCs are in-scope to transfer to the National Probation Service and the Dynamic Framework providers. We are also working with the relevant Trade Unions to secure agreement for staff transferring from the CRCs to the National Probation Service to be aligned to National Probation Service terms and conditions upon transfer. This is subject to staff ballot and if this is not agreed, the terms and conditions of CRC employees' existing contracts would be protected upon transfer.

■ **Coronavirus: Crime**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[78546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of fines wrongfully issued under (a) the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 and (b) Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Chris Philp:

HMCTS are not able to assess the number of fines wrongfully issued under (a) the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 and (b) Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 as we do not hold this data on our Magistrates and/or Crown Court systems.

The Crown Prosecution Service have conducted and publicised a very early review of all prosecutions brought under the Act and all those brought under the regulations. Their findings have been published as follows:

March/April: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-announces-review-findings-first-200-cases-under-coronavirus-laws>

NUMBER OF CASES FINALISED (MARCH & APRIL)

NUMBER INCORRECTLY CHARGED

	Health Protection Regulations : 187	Withdrawn 7 cases
Returned to Court	5	
Total	12	
	Coronavirus Act : 44 cases	Withdrawn 31
Returned to Court	13	
Total	44	

May: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-review-finds-improvements-coronavirus-charging-compliance>

NUMBER OF CASES FINALISED (MAY)

NUMBER INCORRECTLY CHARGED

	Health Protection Regulations : 84	Withdrawn 8 cases
Returned to Court	0	
Total	8	
	Coronavirus Act : 9 cases	Withdrawn 8
Returned to Court	1	
Total	9	

June: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/latest-findings-cps-coronavirus-review>

NUMBER OF CASES FINALISED (JUNE)	NUMBER INCORRECTLY CHARGED
	Health Protection Regulations : 105 Withdrawn 6 cases
Returned to Court	0
Total	6
	Coronavirus Act : 36 cases Withdrawn 35
Returned to Court	1
Total	36

■ Court of Protection

Chris Bryant: [\[76615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July to Question 74457 on Court protection, what the average waiting time was for an application for deputyship to be heard by the Court of Protection in (a) April, (b) May and (c) June 2020.

Chris Philp:

Applications for deputyship heard by the Court of Protection are published in Family Court Statistics Quarterly (FCSQ). They are a subset of data which is due for publication in September so cannot be provided at this stage.

■ Courts

Ellie Reeves: [\[76846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the oral evidence of the Chief Executive, HM Courts and Tribunals Service to the Justice Select Committee on 23 June 2020, when his Department will publish information on (a) where the next round of Nightingale court venues will be located and (b) when these court venues will be functional.

Chris Philp:

On 19 July, HM Courts & Tribunals Service announced ten locations to provide additional capacity for the courts and tribunals estate on a temporary basis. These sites are located across England and Wales and are intended to hear civil, family and tribunals work as well as non-custodial crime cases, and thereby free up room in existing courts to hear other cases, including custodial jury trials.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service is working to have all these locations up and running by the end of August. Additional potential sites are being explored across the country and these will be confirmed in due course.

■ Courts and Tribunals: Coronavirus

Ellie Reeves:

[78821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases were heard in (a) family courts, (b) civil courts, (c) magistrates courts, (d) crown courts and (e) tribunals in the most recent period for which figures are available; and (i) how many and (ii) what type of cases are outstanding in each of those courts as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Philp:

Official published national statistics detailing the type and volume of cases disposed from January 2020 to March 2020 for (a) family courts, (b) civil courts, (c) criminal courts and (d) tribunals can be viewed at the following links.

a) Family - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly>

b) Civil - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-justice-statistics-quarterly>

c) Criminal - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>

d) Tribunals - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics>

The volume of cases outstanding in the crown and magistrates' courts from January 2020 to March 2020 are also included in the criminal court published statistics.

Published national statistics on the number of outstanding cases in the family and civil courts are not available.

The latest HMCTS weekly management information during coronavirus, detailing the type and volume of cases disposed and outstanding up to 26 July 2020, can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-weekly-management-information-during-coronavirus-march-to-july-2020>. This management information is subject to the data quality issues associated with large administrative systems, including the late reporting of cases and regular updating of case details, which can lead to the figures being revised. It excludes figures relating to outstanding work in the civil courts - these are not currently collated because a large proportion of cases that begin are subsequently settled out of court or discontinued without HMCTS being notified.

■ Courts: Costs

Ellie Reeves:

[78820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release entitled, 10 Nightingale Courts unveiled, published on 19 July 2020, how much each of the the 10 temporary courts listed will cost to establish.

Chris Philp:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service announced ten locations to provide additional capacity for the courts and tribunals estate on a temporary basis. These sites are located across England and Wales and are intended to hear civil, family and tribunals work as well as non-custodial crime cases, and thereby free up room in existing courts to hear other cases, including custodial jury trials.

Establishment costs are provided below (excluding ongoing running costs):

PILOT SITE	SET-UP COSTS*
Prospero House, London	297,190
(the former) Telford County Court	251,421
(the former) Fleetwood Magistrates' Court	150,312
Hertfordshire Development Centre	1,350
Swansea Civic Centre	27,579
Cloth Hall Court, Leeds	16,656
Middlesbrough Town Hall	10,163
East Pallant House, Chichester	1,350
Petty France, London	23,428
Peterborough Cathedral	56,256
Total	835,705

*these include the cost of IT and video equipment, furniture, portorage, enabling works to prepare a site, and other costs such as security equipment.

■ Crime: Victim Support Schemes

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to increase support for victims of crime.

Alex Chalk:

The Government is committed to ensuring that victims of crime receive the help and support they need to cope and recover.

We know that many victims of crime are not receiving the rights they are entitled to which is why we will shortly be publishing a revised Victims' Code and plan to guarantee victims' rights through a Victims' Law.

We recognise the importance of adequate and sustainable funding to support victims of crime, and are therefore developing a cross-government Victims' Funding Strategy to maximise the impact of the support we provide at national and local level.

This year, the MoJ has committed additional funding to support victims of rape and sexual abuse. In April, we increased the funding available to rape support centres across England and Wales by 50%, raising core funding for centres to £12 million per annum. A further £4m per annum until 2022 has been invested to recruit more

Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) across England and Wales to help victims feel informed and supported at every stage of their journey.

Measures in the Domestic Abuse Bill, introduced into the House of Lords on 7 July 2020, will also increase the support available for victims of domestic abuse, including through a statutory duty on tier one local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation. Alongside the Bill, we are providing £35 million to combat domestic abuse. That includes £1.5 million to support migrant victims, £3 million to support children affected by domestic abuse and £15 million for the development and pilot of integrated domestic abuse courts and perpetrator programmes.

We have also increased funding to enable support services to respond to victims' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Justice has allocated £25 million to support domestic abuse and sexual violence support services across England and Wales; to date, over £22 million has been distributed to charities. A further £600k of funding has been awarded to enable the expansion and national roll out of digital and helpline services. We continue to work across government, with the sector and local bodies through our COVID-19 Victims and Witnesses Silver Command to identify ongoing needs and ensure support is available for victims and witnesses.

■ Debt Collection: Contracts

Liz Saville Roberts:

[76808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's news story of 5 November 2019, Approved Enforcement Agency Services Contract Awarded, what contingency plans his Department has made to ensure service continuity in the event that any of those contracts so awarded run into financial difficulties.

Chris Philp:

The Approved Enforcement Agency (AEA) contracts were due to commence on the 1st June 2020. The Department has delayed service commencement from 1st June 2020 to 1st September 2020.

This decision was taken to support the financial position of incoming providers as well as to ensure readiness for service commencement, taking into consideration the restrictions placed upon enforcement activity by the government as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The contracts, and their structure, provide contingency to the Department, by:

- Avoiding reliance on a single service provider
- Introducing a secondary provider for each HMCTS region, that will undertake re-issued warrants of control during normal operation, but is able to step in to the role of the primary provider should they be required to do so
- Including 'Step-In' rights across contracts to allow some or all of the work to be transferred between providers

- Requiring service providers to produce and maintain comprehensive Insolvency Plans as part of their Business Continuity Plan. These plans are subject to review and approval by the Department
- Including early warning mechanisms via the contractual obligation to notify the Department of financial distress events and the monitoring of defined financial indicators
- Securing guarantees with the parent company of service providers to provide security in the event of failure and mitigate any cost to the Department

Liz Saville Roberts:

[76809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's news story of 5 November 2019, Approved Enforcement Agency Services Contract Awarded, whether departmental trade unions were consulted on those awards.

Chris Philp:

The Approved Enforcement Agency (AEA) contracts were awarded after a rigorous tender and evaluation process. The outcome was determined by application of technical and qualitative evaluation criteria.

The Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) were informed of the awards on an embargoed basis prior to publication.

Regular consultation and engagement with DTUS has been ongoing throughout the procurement and implementation.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[76810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's news story of 5 November 2019, Approved Enforcement Agency Services Contract Awarded, whether departmental trade unions have raised any concerns about those awards.

Chris Philp:

The Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) oppose the decision to fully outsource the Warrant of Arrest service, which will result in the transfer of HMCTS employed CEOs being transferred to Approved Enforcement Agencies under the TUPE regulations.

The DTUS have expressed concern about the financial viability of the providers post Covid-19 and have also raised concerns about some of the measure that have been proposed.

The above matters have been addressed by the Department and the providers throughout the ongoing consultation process.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[76811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's news story of 5 November 2019, Approved Enforcement Agency Services Contract Awarded, whether departmental trade unions have raised any concerns about those awards that have since been addressed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The Departmental Trade Union Side (DTUS) oppose the decision to fully outsource the Warrant of Arrest service, which will result in the transfer of HMCTS employed CEOs being transferred to Approved Enforcement Agencies under the TUPE regulations.

The DTUS have expressed concern about the financial viability of the providers post Covid-19 and have also raised concerns about some of the measure that have been proposed. The MOJ has no reason to believe the service providers are unable to carry out the contract deliverables.

The MOJ has an established contractual relationship with the incoming service providers. From the onset of Covid-19, engagement has continued to understand and assess the operational and financial impact and whether service providers were likely to seek any contractual relief to support long term service provision. These discussions are ongoing.

The Department and the providers have addressed the issues raised by DTUS throughout the ongoing consultation process.

■ Debt Collection: Coronavirus**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[76807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's news story of 5 November 2019, Approved Enforcement Agency Services Contract Awarded, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) the financial viability of the successful contractors and (b) their ability to deliver the contract in line with their original bids.

Chris Philp:

a) The Approved Enforcement Agency (AEA) contracts were due to commence on the 1st June 2020. MOJ has delayed service commencement from 1st June 2020 to 1st September 2020, this decision was in part to support the financial position of incoming providers as well as ensuring readiness for service commencement, taking into consideration the restrictions placed upon enforcement by the statutory instrument.

A robust assessment of the incoming service providers' financial standing was performed as part of the open tender that took place for the AEA contracts. This is recent and comprehensive assessment of the service providers' financial positioning.

The MOJ has an established contractual relationship with the incoming service providers. There has been regular engagement with service providers from the point of contract award at the beginning of the year. From the onset of Covid-19, engagement has continued to understand and assess the operational and financial impact and whether service providers were likely to seek any contractual relief to support long term service provision. These discussions are ongoing.

The contracts obligate the service providers to notify the Authority of any financial distress event, as defined in the contract, alongside the obligations to ensure regular monitoring of defined financial indicators. MOJ has not received any such notification.

b) The contracts introduced a structured governance process throughout the implementation period which monitors and manages the readiness of parties to commence service delivery against previously reviewed and approved implementation plans. The progress is assessed on a fortnightly basis in addition to ad hoc engagement on specific elements of the plan as identified by the relevant leads.

The delay to service commencement (from 1 June to 1 September) has enabled confidence in the ability of all parties to commence services from 1 September. Issues and risks related to Covid-19 have been identified with an appropriate management strategy. These have been built into the implementation plans and reports provided to the MOJ, and we remain confident of service delivery to the required timescales and in line with the service providers' bids. The MOJ is continuing to develop the practices, processes and procedures in response to Covid-19 health and safety and are continually discussing these with service providers.

The MOJ has no reason to believe the service providers are unable to carry out the contract deliverables.

■ Feltham Young Offender Institution

Paula Barker: [\[76925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the oral answer of the Minister of State of 14 July 2020 to the Justice Select Committee, Question 264, what discussions his Department has had with UCU on opening up education (a) at HMYOI Feltham and (b) across the prison estate.

Paula Barker: [\[76926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the answer of the Minister for Justice to question 266 in oral evidence to the Justice Committee on 14 July 2020, HC 306, what assessment he has made of the (a) level and (b) extent of engagement between Prospects Shaw Trust and University and College Union on risk assessments on delivering education at Feltham Young Offender Institution.

Paula Barker: [\[76927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the answer of the Minister for Justice to question 266 in oral evidence to the Justice Committee on 14 July 2020, HC 306, what discussions his Department has had with (a) Prospects and (b) the Shaw Trust on (i) risk assessments for delivering education and (ii) industrial relations with the University and College Union at Feltham Young Offender Institution.

Paula Barker: [\[76928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the answer of the Minister for Justice to question 266 in oral evidence to the Justice Committee on 14 July 2020, HC

306, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Prospects engages with the Universities and College Union on risk assessments for delivering education at Feltham Young Offenders Institution.

Lucy Frazer:

The University and College Union (UCU) is not a recognised Trade Union by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). As such it is the responsibility of the private providers, who deliver education and recognise the UCU, to have discussions on the delivery of education during the Covid-19 recovery period. All providers are fully engaged in local risk assessments to ensure obligations are fulfilled to staff, department and children in custody, and the Youth Custody Service has liaised with Prospects with regard to their obligations on this basis.

With regards to risk assessments on delivering education, the teachers who provide education across the children and young people secure estate are protected by the Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure agreed between HMPPS and its recognised trade unions.

Additionally, HMPPS have consulted with recognised trade unions at both a local and national level on their Exceptional Delivery Models and risk readiness assessments. These assessments considered and encompassed staff working in educational settings, including staff not employed directly by HMPPS.

■ **Marriage: Ceremonies**

Nadia Whittome:

[\[78932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of permitting independent celebrants to carry out legal marriage ceremonies.

Alex Chalk:

The Government announced in June 2019 that the Law Commission will conduct a fundamental review of the law on how and where people can legally marry in England and Wales. As part of that review, the Law Commission will make recommendations regarding how provision could be made for the use of independent celebrants and the Government will decide on provision once the Law Commission publishes its recommendations. The Law Commission has now published a consultation paper as part of its review and will welcome responses from all.

■ **Marriage: Humanism**

Janet Daby:

[\[77802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the legal recognition of humanist marriages in Scotland since 2005; and if he will make it his policy to legally recognise those marriages in England.

Janet Daby:

[\[77803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the covid-19 outbreak has delayed the Law Commission review of marriage law; and what the timescale is for that review.

Alex Chalk:

Reform of marriage law in England and Wales should be undertaken on a comprehensive rather than piecemeal basis. That is why we invited the Law Commission last year to review the law on how and where couples may marry. As part of that review, the Law Commission will make recommendations about how marriage by humanist and other non-religious belief organisations could be incorporated into a revised or new scheme for all marriages that is simple, fair and consistent.

The Commission initially delayed its publication of the consultation paper due to the Coronavirus pandemic but the consultation is now live. The law on wedding ceremonies is a complex and important area of the law. The Commission considered it essential to conduct a proper consultation with the wide range of interested groups and individuals who would be affected by reform. It did not feel that publishing during the initial period of public emergency would achieve this, particularly when weddings were being postponed.

The Commission will be considering its overall timetable in light of the timing of the consultation, and it expects to report to Government with its recommendations in the second half of next year.

■ **National Probation Service for England and Wales: Staff**

Grahame Morris:

[\[78612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to encourage probation agency staff to take up permanent positions within the National Probation Service.

Grahame Morris:

[\[78614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of workers in the National Probation Service were employed by agencies in each of the last 12 months.

Alex Chalk:

The National Probation Service (NPS) is currently exploring a number of initiatives in relation to staffing. We have already introduced minimum hours contracts, guaranteeing individuals a certain amount of hours per month with the flexible option to work more (if individuals and the organisation wish to do so).

We are also recruiting colleagues who have left the service within the past five years with the option to join on various contract terms or even request reinstatement on their previous terms. Whilst these initiatives are not limited only to the agency workers, we anticipate a specific interest from agency workers as such initiatives offer greater flexibility.

In addition to this, in line with Civil Service Recruitment principles, NPS managers encourage agency workers to apply for any relevant external recruitment vacancies.

On July 30 we published the Probation Workforce Strategy which sets out our collective ambition for a more positive, inclusive, and diverse probation workforce, and the steps we are committed to taking to achieve this over the three years from 2020 to 2023. It includes firm commitments to increasing our recruitment and supporting our staff, and can be found via the following link;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/probation-workforce-strategy>

The attached table shows figures for contingent labour between July 2019 and June this year. It has been broken down by NPS region, post, per month. It should be noted that the figures have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 78614 - NPS Contingent Labour Data v2.xlsx]

■ Offences against Children: Convictions

Rosie Cooper:

[78579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been (a) prosecuted and (b) convicted for livestreaming sexual exploitation of children in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

Live-streaming of sexual exploitation of children may be prosecuted under a number of offences. These include (but are not limited to) causing the sexual exploitation of a child (s48 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003)), controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation (s49, SOA 2003), arranging or facilitating the sexual exploitation of a child (s50, SOA 2003).

The Ministry of Justice publishes information on prosecutions and convictions by detailed offence and figures relating to the offences outlined above can be found in the Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx

The data tool can be filtered by 'Offence code', for offences relating to the above, filter to the following:

07108 Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07109 Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07110 Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography - child aged 13 to 17

07111 Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography - child under 13

07112 Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography - child under 13

07113 Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography - child under 13

Please note that these offences cover a broader range of behaviour than live-streaming, such as recording or otherwise transmitting indecent images of children.

■ Prison Officers

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[77730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 July 2020, Official Report, HCWS408, Government response to the Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations 20/21, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) scope and (b) timeframe of the workplace reforms for prison officers.

Lucy Frazer:

It was announced in the Written Ministerial Statement made on 21 July that we would be considering the PSPRBs recommendation 3 (recommended with effect from September) over more time. As part of this, we intend to open discussions with recognised trade unions on the implications of the recommendation, and how any such uplift in pay could be made affordable, mutually beneficial, and offer value for money for tax payer.

Such discussions with trade unions remain live have not concluded, and it would therefore not be appropriate to discuss publicly at this time.

We will carefully consider any points raised by unions and hope to reach an agreement that both aligns with the broader public-sector workforce agenda while best benefitting all. We will return to this recommendation later in the year.

■ Prison Officers: Pensions

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[77731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant the the Written Statement of 21 July 2020, Official Report HCWS408, Government response to the Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations 20/21, whether the pension age of prison officers will be included in the review of workplace reforms.

Lucy Frazer:

It was announced in the Written Ministerial Statement made on 21 July that we would be considering the PSPRBs recommendation 3 (recommended with effect from September) over more time. As part of this, we intend to open discussions with recognised trade unions on the implications of the recommendation, and how any such uplift in pay could be made affordable, mutually beneficial, and offer value for money for taxpayer.

Such discussions with trade unions have not concluded, and it would therefore not be appropriate to discuss publicly at this time.

We will carefully consider any points raised by unions and hope to reach an agreement that both aligns with the broader public-sector workforce agenda while best benefitting all. We will return to this recommendation later in the year.

■ Prisons: Autism

Dame Cheryl Gillan:

[\[76555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy to include the recording of autism in the Prison Population Statistics.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is committed to supporting all vulnerable people who come into contact with the criminal justice system, including individuals with autism. We recognise the importance of meeting the needs of this cohort, are therefore taking steps to improve the collection and recording of data on disability.

This includes ongoing work by HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) to implement a new data categorisation list which aligns with that used by the World Health Organisation and the Government Statistical Service on the new Prison National Offender Management Information System (new-NOMIS). This will provide a better structured and more intuitively organised list of conditions, allowing more accurate recording of disabilities and health conditions, including Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Improving this data will allow us to better understand and support the prison population and its individual needs, as well as enabling the identification of any disparity in outcomes. Once the categorisation has fully bedded into our systems and we have sufficient completion rates and data quality, we will aim to publish this within our annual Official Statistics report 'Offender Equalities'.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[77821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, for what reasons the HM Prison and Probation Service has declared a moratorium on prison research during the period of covid-19 related solitary confinement; and if he will make an assessment of the (a) effects of confinement on individuals and (b) potential merits of different means of (i) ameliorating those effects and (ii) tackling future infections.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[77822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will commission independent research on the effects on prisoners of being placed in long-term solitary confinement in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Lucy Frazer:

As a result of the strong but necessary measures we introduced in prisons, lives have been saved and the NHS is being protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks. The safety of our staff and those in our care remains our top priority, and social distancing is one of the most effective controls to reduce the transmission of infection.

HMPPS does not hold people in solitary confinement, but there are occasions where, for their own safety or that of others and in line with Prison Service Order 1700, prisoners are segregated from the main population of the prison. We have not

changed this policy in response to Covid-19, and have therefore not put any prisoner into solitary confinement.

The response to the COVID-19 crisis has been guided by Public Health England and Wales advice. We have taken decisions to control the spread of infection across the estate, which has resulted in prisoners receiving less time out of their cells, compared to regimes before the pandemic. We recognise that the restrictions brought in to control the spread of infection must be proportionate, and we will continue to keep them under review. Our National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services, which has been guided by public health advice, sets out in detail how we will take decisions about easing coronavirus-related restrictions in prisons, while keeping staff and those in our care safe.

The National Research Committee (NRC) approves research to be conducted with staff and offenders across HMPPS. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the NRC has restricted the number of applications to conduct primary research across HMPPS until further notice; only applications to conduct high priority or urgent projects continue to be reviewed, including requests to access existing data for secondary analysis.

The decision was taken to prevent the spread of the virus, protect staff and those accommodated in prisons and to reduce the burden on prison resources while prisons operate under restricted regimes. The NRC restrictions will be kept under review and easement will be informed by the National Framework.

Ian Byrne:

[77836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timeframe is for the (a) easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions in prisons and (b) the resumption of prison visits in England and Wales as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Lucy Frazer:

As a result of the strong but necessary measures we introduced in prisons, including suspending social visits, lives have been saved and the NHS is being protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks.

Some prisons have already started to ease restrictions, including re-starting social visits with appropriate social distancing and hygiene arrangements, and enabling more time out of cell. More prisons will do so over the coming weeks, guided by public health advice and with safety remaining the absolute priority.

Individual prisons and the youth estate will progress at their own speed, taking full account of their specific local circumstances.

A temporary video call service to support prisoners maintaining contact with family and friends has also been introduced. This is intended for use whilst contact is limited and we are considering the benefits of maintaining these digital solutions in the longer term, in line with the recommendations of Lord Farmer's reviews.

■ Prisons: Disclosure of Information

Gordon Henderson: [\[76674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 904751, what the (a) scope and (b) timeframe of the HMPPS review into the whistleblowing process for prison staff is.

Gordon Henderson: [\[76675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to his Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 904751, what steps he is taking to make whistleblowing a (a) safe and (b) meaningful exercise for all prison staff.

Gordon Henderson: [\[76676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to his oral Answer of 14 July 2020 to Question 904751, what assessment he has made of the ability of prison staff to use the existing whistleblowing process with confidence that it is confidential.

Lucy Frazer:

The existing Ministry of Justice (MoJ) whistleblowing policy is currently being reviewed by the MoJ HR Policy team. The changes being looked at are primarily extra resources and language changes to further encourage individuals to raise any concerns. We are aiming to conclude this and launch the new policy in the Autumn.

Any Ministry of Justice employee who raises a concern using the Whistleblowing policy will be supported and will not suffer any unfair or negative treatment as a result. Where a protected disclosure is made the individual also has a legal entitlement to protection. All concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, sensitively and as quickly as possible.

Any disclosures made under the MoJ whistleblowing procedure will be treated in a sensitive manner. Details of individuals will only be shared with those who need to know, in order to investigate and progress the matter.

■ Prisons: Pay

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[77732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 July 2020, Official Report HCWS408, Government response to the Prison Service Pay Review Body recommendations 20/21, for what reason the recommendations of the Prison Service Pay Review Body on pensionable pay were not accepted in full.

Lucy Frazer:

The Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) has made its recommendations for the 2020-21 pay award, and these recommendations recognise the hard work of our prison workforce in keeping some of the most vulnerable people in our society safe.

We value this immensely, which is why we accepted in full recommendations 1, 2 and 4 to 7, as made by the review body, for implementation from April 2020. For the third year in a row we have given above-inflation pay awards to our hard-working prison

staff. This year's pay award increases pay by at least 2.5% for all prison staff – with cumulative awards of up to 7.5% for some staff when progression pay is taken into account.

The PSPRB also recommended a further pay increase for 'Band 3' prison officers on modernised terms and conditions from September 2020 (recommendation 3). We are taking the time to consider this more carefully over the coming months as we move towards the Spending Review. We must also consider the context of the economic and labour market landscape shaped by COVID-19, and the pay awards being awarded to other hardworking public servants.

Discussions are ongoing on recommendation 3, and the government will announce its response later in the year.

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Alex Davies-Jones:

[76933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) stakeholder group meetings, (b) literature reviews and (c) expert interviews have been undertaken to examine the role of juries and courts in rape cases as part of the Government's Rape Review.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government recognises that the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for significant concern. As such an end-to-end review of the criminal justice response to rape and serious sexual offences was commissioned in March 2019 by the National Criminal Justice Board (CJB). A sub-group of the CJB made up of experts and operational partners from across the criminal justice system is driving forward the review

To answer your questions in turn: a) The review has established a Stakeholder Reference Group, which is made up of victim organisations, and is consulted to ensure the review considers the victim experience of the whole criminal justice system. The review team has met with this group three times, in May 2019, February 2020 and April 2020. Members of the Group have also been engaged by the Review team separately to discuss specific elements of the review. b) The review has commissioned a Literature Review of research currently in the public domain that studies the end to end progression of rape cases in England and Wales, including findings relevant to the role of juries and courts c) Five expert interviews were undertaken with barristers as part of a wider suite of qualitative and quantitative work which included 23 focus groups and in-depth interviews and 691 surveys with police officers, specialist victims support services including Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), barristers, HMCTS and CPS prosecutors.

■ Sexual Offences: Immigrants

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[76934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government's Rape Review will examine potential barriers to reporting rape and sexual offences crimes for migrant victims.

Kit Malthouse:

In March 2019 the National Criminal Justice Board (CJB) commissioned a review to consider the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales. A sub-group of the CJB is driving forward the review and continues to gather and analyse detailed views from key groups and agencies across the criminal justice system.

The review is currently focussed on understanding how the system's response to rape cases can be improved from the time a report is made to when a case reaches court, as such barriers to reporting fall outside of the scope.

The Government is committed to ensuring that all victims of rape and sexual violence have access to high-quality support services to help them cope with and, as far as possible, recover from the effects of crime. These services are available to all, provided by specialist local organisations at a physical location, free of charge and regardless of whether a person reported the crime to police.

■ Special Guardianship Orders

Helen Hayes:

[\[78770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many children have been under a special guardianship order (a) where there were no care proceedings and (b) where there have been care proceedings in each year since 2010.

Alex Chalk:

The table below sets out how many children have been under a special guardianship order (a) where there were no care proceedings and (b) where there have been care proceedings in each year since 2011:

CHILDREN INVOLVED IN SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS:

Year	Total ²	Those where no care proceedings took place		Those where care proceedings took place ³	
		Number	%	Number	%
2011	4,286	1,775	41%	2,511	59%
2012	5,621	1,828	33%	3,793	67%
2013	6,788	2,158	32%	4,630	68%
2014	6,796	2,297	34%	4,499	66%

CHILDREN INVOLVED IN SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS:

2015	7,465	2,416	32%	5,049	68%
2016	7,483	2,371	32%	5,112	68%
2017	7,343	2,080	28%	5,263	72%
2018	7,409	2,186	30%	5,223	70%
2019	7,302	2,623	36%	4,679	64%

1) FAMILYMAN WAS FULLY ROLLED OUT IN DECEMBER 2010, AND DATA PRIOR TO THIS IS SUBJECT TO DATA QUALITY PROBLEMS. AS SUCH, DATA FROM 2011 ONLY HAVE BEEN PROVIDED

2) Includes both public and private law

3) Only public law cases are subject to care proceedings

■ Tribunals: Judgements

Alex Cunningham:

[\[76688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what safeguards are in place to protect individuals whose names may be referenced in published tribunal judgments.

Chris Philp:

Open justice is a fundamental principle of the operation on courts and tribunals. Tribunals can make orders for proceedings to be anonymised where it is in the interests of justice to do so.

The Ministry of Justice will be working closely with the judiciary and HMCTS to establish a coherent approach for publication of judgments and case outcomes while ensuring appropriate protection for personal data.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Official Visits: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart:

[\[77858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what information he holds on the number of visits made to Northern Ireland by the (a) Prime Minister of the Irish Republic and (b) Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Irish Republic in each of the last three years.

Mr Robin Walker:

While the UK Government is, by convention, informed in advance of visits to Northern Ireland by members of the Irish Government, the UK Government does not maintain

a record of every visit by a member of foreign Governments to the UK. No details are held, therefore, on the exact number of visits by either the Taoiseach or the Minister for Foreign Affairs to Northern Ireland.

■ **Police Service of Northern Ireland: Disclosure of Information**

Grahame Morris:

[\[76666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the written judgment of the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland in response to the judicial review brought by Fine Point Films and journalists Trevor Birney and Barry McAffrey NICA 35 Ref: MOR11288, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using reserved powers to compel the Police Service of Northern Ireland to release and delete copies of all unlawfully required journalistic material and communications data.

Mr Robin Walker:

The release and/or deletion of any information relating to this issue is a matter for the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

TRANSPORT

■ **Bus Services: Coronavirus**

Karen Bradley:

[\[77600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2020 to Question 52118 on Bus Services: Coronavirus, whether he plans to make additional support available to private coach companies over summer 2020 to help them during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

On 8 August the Government announced a new £40 million funding package for school transport. Local authorities have discretion as to which mode offers the best value for money when procuring vehicles from September, however it is expected some will procure coach support where group sizes are large enough and this is logistically possible.

The Department for Transport has been in regular contact with representatives of the coach industry and we continue to work closely with the coach sector to understand what the ongoing risks and issues are, and how these could be addressed.

■ **Bus Services: Faith Schools and Private Education**

Karen Bradley:

[\[77601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will (a) extend the temporary exemption for fee paying school children on non-Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations compliant transport and (b) allow for more fare-paying passengers for children travelling to faith schools.

Rachel Maclean:

This Government is committed to building an inclusive transport system which allows all passengers to travel on accessible modes of transport. We recognise however that the Covid19 pandemic has hit the coach industry hard and this has had an adverse impact on coach operator's ability to invest in compliant vehicles.

We have therefore offered a further time-limited exemption for closed door home-to-school services until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. We anticipate that this will enable home to school services to continue to operate, enabling children to get to school, including private and faith schools.

■ **Bus Services: Standards**

Geraint Davies: [\[76558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with bus operating companies on improving the (a) reliability and (b) journey times of bus routes.

Rachel Maclean:

Department of Transport ministers and officials are in regular dialogue with bus operators to discuss various issues facing the sector.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Coronavirus**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[77531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in cycling and walking rates as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions have eased.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Cycle usage in England on Monday 24 August was 116% of the equivalent day in the first week of March. Daily data is highly variable and linked to the weather, with days of poorer weather showing lower usage. Currently it is not possible to produce a reliable estimate of walking activity during the period.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

Joy Morrissey: [\[77807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to allocate the £2 billion of funding for active travel announced in early 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 28 July the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, which set a long-term vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030. The plans include a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over the next 5 years.

£225 million has been made available to local authorities this financial year for immediate measures including new cycle lanes, wider pavements and safer junctions. £25 million has been allocated to cycle maintenance initiatives, including

the Fix Your Bike Voucher Scheme. Decisions on the remainder will be for the Spending Review in the autumn.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Infrastructure**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[76622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many local authorities produced local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) by November 2019; and how many have produced LCWIPs since then.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[76623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to encourage local authorities to produce local cycling and walking infrastructure plans.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[76624\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding his Department (a) has allocated and (b) plans to allocate in financial year 2020-21 to support the delivery of local cycling and walking infrastructure plans.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

A total of 40 local authorities have completed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), 9 of which were submitted by November 2019.

£225 million has been allocated to local authorities from the Emergency Active Travel Fund in 2020-21 to implement measures such as pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, widened pavements, safer junctions and cycle corridors. Authorities have been encouraged to align this funding with schemes prioritised in LCWIPs where possible. Further funding for 2020-21 is being provided through the Transforming Cities Fund and other highways and local growth funding sources.

The Government intends to provide a second wave of support to enable more authorities to produce LCWIPs following the outcome of the Spending Review.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Primary Education**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[77532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage primary school children to walk and cycle to school as they re-open in September 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

£225 million has been made available to local authorities this financial year for urgent measures to make it easier for people to walk and cycle for all short journeys, including to support the re-opening of schools. This in addition to existing support for the Walk to School outreach programme delivered by Living Streets. The Department for Education has also produced updated travel to school guidance for the autumn term 2020 which states that schools and colleges should encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

■ Cycling: Finance**Kerry McCarthy:** [76625]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the announcement of the £250 million emergency active travel fund on 9 May 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the additional investment required to double cycling by 2025.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

£2 billion of dedicated investment is being provided over the next five years to help deliver the aims and targets set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. This is expected to leverage in significant amounts of wider Government and local funding that will be required to double cycling by 2025. On the 7th February the Department published extensive material from the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Investment Model, including technical reports and evidence base research papers setting out the relationship between investment and cycling and walking levels.

■ Cycling: Infrastructure**Kerry McCarthy:** [77533]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Government plans to publish an updated Cycle Infrastructure Guidance for Local Authorities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On the 27 July the Department published updated cycle infrastructure design guidance (Local Transport Note 1/20) for local authorities, with the aim of improving quality, accessibility and safety of local cycle infrastructure schemes. This guidance can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

■ Driving Instruction: Coronavirus**Sir Charles Walker:** [76626]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, whether trainee driving instructors who are practising for their test will continue to be permitted to instruct learner drivers on a no fee basis; when he plans that DVSA instructor ability tests will resume; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean

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

A trainee licence allows someone preparing for their instructional ability test to consolidate their training by teaching learner drivers. A trainee licence allows trainees to charge those pupils and cover their costs. It is not necessary to hold a trainee licence to prepare for the instructional ability test. A potential instructor could teach

learners for practice so long as the pupil does not pay for the lesson or contribute to any costs, such as fuel or insurance.

As different approaches to easing lockdown are currently being adopted across England, Scotland and Wales, the DVSA is following published guidance in each of those countries as it restarts its services safely for its customers and its staff. It will continue to observe the guidance and scale up its services when it is permissible and lawful to do so.

Approved driving instructor part 3 tests (instructional ability) resumed in:

England on 22 July 2020

Wales on 17 August 2020

Scotland – date to be confirmed

■ **Easyjet: Redundancy**

Gavin Robinson:

[\[78687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives of Easyjet on that company's redundancy proposals.

Kelly Tolhurst:

We recognise that the Easyjet announcement on redundancies will be distressing news for Easyjet employees and their families and Government stands ready to support them.

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with airlines, airports and unions to understand the impact that COVID-19 is having on the sector and its workers.

■ **Estonia: Coronavirus**

Alan Brown:

[\[78730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department made of the number of new daily covid-19 cases recorded in Estonia as part of its decision to exclude it as a country with an agreed airbridge with the UK.

Alan Brown:

[\[78731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the evidential basis is for Estonia being identified as a country where quarantine arrangements are still required for travellers between Estonia and the UK.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Decisions on the Travel Corridor list have been informed by a risk assessment developed by the Joint Biosecurity Centre, in close consultation with Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer.

The Government keeps the data for all countries and territories under constant review and updates the exemptions list with any changes on a regular basis as and when required to reflect the shifting international health picture.

The Government added Estonia to the Travel Corridor list on 28 July.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Liam Byrne:

[\[76602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to speed up the delivery of High Speed Two.

Andrew Stephenson:

Following the award of Notice-to-Proceed and the start of main works construction on Phase One, my Department is continuing to work hard to identify opportunities for HS2 to meet the ambition of the Government's 'Project Speed' agenda and being forward its delivery.

To support this aim I held a constructive meeting with the four Joint Ventures responsible for delivering the Main Works Civils on Phase One to gather ideas and feedback from the industry on how to accelerate works across High Speed 2.

As recommended by the Oakervee Review, my Department is also undertaking a study to consider the efficiency of Euston station.

The Oakervee review also concluded, following experience on Phase One, that having smaller Bills/phases may be better for allowing the easier scrutiny of proposals in Parliament and therefore faster construction of the project. I intend to present legislation for the route into Manchester for deposit in Parliament by early 2022.

The department is to develop an integrated plan for rail investment to make sure we are bringing benefits to the North and Midlands as quickly and efficiently as we possibly can.

■ Motor Vehicles: Fossil Fuels

Geraint Davies:

[\[76559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on bringing forward the ban on new fossil fuel vehicle engines to 2030.

Rachel Maclean:

On 4 February, the Prime Minister launched a consultation on bringing forward an end to the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans from 2040 to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible. This consultation ends on the 31 July. The Secretary of State and Minister Maclean have regular discussions with the Business Secretary to discuss the many ways in which the Government is working to achieve net zero by 2050.

■ Motor Vehicles: Safety

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[77583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the effect on levels of (a) pedestrian and cyclist safety and (b) passenger safety of vehicle construction standards in the (i) US and (ii) UK.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport has considered the differences in the technical standards designed to provide protection for both vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, and vehicle occupants in the USA and the UK.

In the UK, new passenger cars and light goods vehicles must meet minimum levels of protection for pedestrian leg and head impacts, but there are no equivalent tests in the USA.

Occupant safety is more complex as there are several standards in both countries designed to improve safety for those inside vehicles. Research carried out by the European Union in preparation for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations suggests that occupant protection in both countries is broadly similar. However, differences in both the way vehicles are categorised and the make-up of the vehicle fleets make direct comparison difficult.

■ Parking Offences: Cycleways

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[77534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the new powers given to local authorities to take enforcement action against drivers parked in cycle lanes will apply to all mandatory cycle lanes.

Rachel Maclean:

The powers in force since 22 June 2020 allow local authorities with designated civil parking enforcement powers to use approved cameras to enforce parking and loading restrictions while in operation within mandatory cycle lanes. These restrictions are indicated by prescribed yellow line or kerb markings and traffic signs as appropriate. The powers do not apply in mandatory cycle lanes where such restrictions are not so indicated.

■ Railways: Coronavirus

Ian Byrne:

[\[77835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure that the terms of the covid-19 emergency management arrangements with train operating companies do not financially benefit those organisations compared with their franchise agreements prior to the covid-19 lockdown.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) temporarily suspend the existing franchise agreements' financial mechanisms for an initial period of six months. They

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

Operators are required to continue to fulfil their obligations under the EMAs for a small, pre-determined management fee. Fees are set at a maximum of 2 per cent of the cost base of the franchise before the Covid-19 pandemic began, intended to incentivise operators to meet reliability, punctuality and other targets.

■ Railways: North West

Derek Twigg:

[\[76600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timescale is for reaching a decision on the potential electrification of the railway line between Liverpool and Manchester via Warrington and Widnes.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Electrification will play a significant role in our programme to decarbonise the railway and will deliver other benefits for railway users and neighbours.

Network Rail's ongoing work developing a Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy will inform decisions about whether electrification or alternative technologies are the most appropriate option for each part of the network where diesel trains currently run. This work will support the Department's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which will be published at the end of this year.

■ Railways: Onllwyn

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[78822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the development of The Global Centre of Rail Excellence on the site of Nant Helen Open Cast Mine in Onllwyn.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

There have been no recent discussions between the Secretary of State for Transport with the Welsh Government on this subject. The Welsh Government and its partners in the project have approached a number of UK Government Departments for support, including the Department for Transport and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The proposal will be considered alongside other options in the context of the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Roads: Kent**Helen Hayes:**[\[76798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many times officials or ministers in his Department met with the Kent Resilience Forum to discuss Operation Brock in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) to date in 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

I am responding to this question as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport. Official Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) meetings to discuss Operation Brock are divided into strategic and tactical working groups. These are the meetings where the whole KRF are in attendance and consist of Government Department officials, agencies and Kent stakeholders. In 2018 there were five strategic and five tactical meetings. In 2019, there were 22 strategic and 22 tactical meetings. In 2020, there have been nine strategic and eight tactical meetings to date.

Speed Limits: Cameras**Jim Shannon:**[\[77618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent guidance his Department has issued to local authorities on the location of speed cameras.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department's circular 'Using speed and red-light cameras for traffic enforcement: deployment, visibility and signing' (DfT Circular 01/2007) was published 31 January 2007 to provide guidance and best practice advice on the deployment of speed and red-light cameras after 1 April 2007.

This advice was re-issued to all councils in 2015 and remains extant.

Transport: Coronavirus**John Spellar:**[\[76591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that emergency powers granted to local authorities during the covid-19 outbreak are not being used to avoid local consultation and opposition on matters relating to transport.

Rachel Maclean:

It is for local authorities to ensure that any changes they propose to make to road layouts are delivered in line with relevant consultation and noticing requirements.

The changes made in the emergency legislation which came into force on 22 May did not change the existing requirements for noticing for Traffic Regulation Orders. Local authorities are still required to give 7 days' notice of proposed temporary changes, to allow time for local residents or businesses to send in any comments or objections.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[78627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure the transport system is safe and accessible to disabled passengers as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government remains as committed to delivering inclusive transport for all passengers as they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. Transport operators should continue to assist disabled passengers where appropriate. I made this clear in my open letter to the rail industry on 8 April 2020.

On 9 May the Department published statutory guidance to local authorities on reallocating road space which makes clear that local authorities must consider the needs of disabled people and those with other protected characteristics when making changes to their transport networks. Public-Sector Equality Duty requirements apply to temporary measures in the same way as they do to permanent ones.

I am also meeting regularly with key disability stakeholders, to hear directly from them about the experiences of disabled people using public transport. This means we will be able to take action quickly if we find that passengers are not receiving the assistance to which they are entitled.

The Government has launched an active communications campaign which advises people about exemptions to the face coverings rules for disability and health reasons. The publication reminds people that not all disabilities are visible and includes a non-compulsory exemption card should people want to use it.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[78628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the needs of disabled passengers as lockdown restrictions are lifted on the transport system.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government remains as committed to delivering inclusive transport for all passengers as lockdown restrictions are lifted, as they were before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Officials and ministers consider the needs of disabled people in all of their decisions, alongside other protected characteristics, in line with their duties under the Equalities Act and Public Sector Equality Duty. We work closely with stakeholders, including disability organisations, and our statutory advisors, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), to understand the needs of disabled people and ensure those views are reflected in policy decisions.

On 9 May the Department published statutory guidance to local authorities on reallocating road space which makes clear that authorities must consider the needs of disabled people and those with other protected characteristics when making changes to their transport networks. Public Sector Equality Duty requirements apply to temporary measures as they do to permanent ones.

■ Transport: Schools

Layla Moran:

[\[76887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to allocate emergency covid-19 funding to providers of school transport that have reduced commercial viability as a result of social distancing regulations in (a) England, (b) Oxfordshire, (c) Oxford, and (d) Abingdon.

Rachel Maclean:

On 8 August, the Department for Transport announced a further funding package for bus operators with rolling funding at up to £27.3 million per week until a time when the funding is no longer needed. Also on 8 August the Department for Education announced a new £40 million funding package for local authorities to support home to school transport. This funding can be used for a variety of transport types/providers as appropriate, including coaches, bus vehicles, community transport vehicles, taxis and private hire vehicles, and SEND (Special Educational Needs Disability) transport.

In addition, the Department for Transport has provided support and grants totalling £7.25 million to local authorities to develop a Travel Demand Management Plan to understand school and work travel patterns and ensure there is safe and sufficient transport for schools.

While the Government will do what we can to support local authorities, solutions must be locally led, with local authorities working closely with transport operators and schools/colleges to identify local area needs and decide the best way to increase capacity, while ensuring value for money of this new funding.

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[78541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department is having with (a) coach operators and (b) the Department for Education on ensuring that there is sufficient capacity within the commercial transport sector to transport children to and from school at the start of the next academic year as a result of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on those providers; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Ministers and officials from my Department have regular meetings with representatives from the coach industry and other government departments on this topic. We continue to work closely with the coach sector to understand what the ongoing risks and issues are, and how these could be addressed.

The Secretary of State for Transport, The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Baroness Vere of Norbiton have met with ministers and officials from the Department of Education to discuss home to school transport. On 8 August, the Department for Transport announced a further funding package for bus operators with rolling funding at up to £27.3 million per week until a time when the funding is no longer needed. Also on 8 August the Department for Education announced a new £40 million funding package for local authorities to

support home to school transport, including the provision of additional coach services.

In addition, the Department for Transport has provided support and grants totalling £7.25 million to local authorities to develop a Travel Demand Management Plan to understand school and work travel patterns and ensure there is safe and sufficient transport for schools.

TREASURY

■ Audiobooks: VAT

Claire Hanna:

[\[78903\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will remove VAT on audio books in line with the removal of VAT on e-books and newspapers on 1 May.

Jesse Norman:

The extension of the zero rate of VAT has been introduced to provide consistency of approach between certain physical and digital publications to support reading and literacy in all its forms. Audiobooks are already taxed consistently at the standard rate in both physical and digital format.

In UK law, a book is deemed to be something that is read or looked at, a definition that does not include audio content in both digital and physical form.

The Government keeps all taxes under review, including VAT, but there are no current plans to extend the VAT zero rate to audiobooks.

■ Children: Day Care

Stella Creasy:

[\[77597\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what dates (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department held discussions with representatives from (i) childcare, (ii) afterschool clubs and (iii) childminding providers on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on their industry.

Steve Barclay:

The department regularly meets a range of stakeholders, which includes discussion of the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses, including the childcare sector.

Since 1 June, early years settings have been able to welcome back children of all ages. All providers of wraparound childcare, and other out-of-school settings, are able to operate for both indoor and outdoor provision, provided they have safety measures in place.

The Government has announced unprecedented support for businesses, including the early years sector, to protect against the current economic emergency. For childcare providers, this includes business rates relief for nurseries, a range of loans and grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and continued early years entitlement funding.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[76635\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July to Question 65099 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Directors, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the 2018-19 submissions for company directors on annual payroll schemes in the same was as for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

For an employee to be eligible for the CJRS they must have been notified to HMRC on a real-time information (RTI) submission on or before 19 March. Those paid annually are eligible to claim, as long as they meet the relevant conditions. These conditions include being notified to HMRC on an RTI submission on or before 19 March 2020, which relates to a payment of earnings in the 2019/2020 tax year. Anyone paid annually and notified on an RTI submission after that date will not be eligible for the scheme, which puts them in the same position as those who are paid more frequently and weren't notified to HMRC on or before 19 March. The 19 March cut-off date allows as many people as possible to be included, by going right up to the day before the announcement and balances the risk of fraud that existed as soon as the scheme became public.

■ Coronavirus: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[78784\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on (a) extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, (b) other employment support and (c) an adequate level of financial support for outdoor residential centres.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury's priority is to support the whole UK economy through Covid-19. IT HAS taken unprecedented steps to support viable businesses to stay afloat and protect the incomes of the most vulnerable.

The Welsh Government and Office of the Secretary of State for Wales play a key part in these discussions, and there is regular engagement on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the Welsh Government's plans to protect jobs and support key sectors in Wales.

■ Covid Corporate Financing Facility

Caroline Lucas:

[\[77558\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason the conditions attached to covid-19 financial support to Celsa Steel announced on 2 June 2020 are not also attached to the public financial support the Bank of England is providing to businesses through the Covid Corporate Financing Facility.

John Glen:

The Covid Corporate Finance Facility (CCFF) is designed to support liquidity and corporate finance markets by purchasing short-term debt in the form of commercial paper from highly creditworthy firms that can demonstrate a material contribution to the UK economy. The scheme was introduced during a period of exceptional volatility in financial markets worldwide, with the purpose of purchasing highly creditworthy corporate debt so as to support corporate finance markets overall and ease the supply of credit to all firms, many of which are experiencing severe disruption to cashflows.

The climate crisis hasn't gone away, but the focus of the Government's economic response is on limiting the short-term health and economic effects of the pandemic. That is why we are allowing a wide spectrum of companies to make use of this scheme, so as to maximise its effectiveness in supporting corporate debt markets and easing cashflow issues for firms.

In the meantime, we remain committed to achieving the long-term changes in our economic system which are necessary to sustainably move towards net zero, which we are committed to achieving by 2050. To ensure that we can support this timely and orderly transition, we need our economic and financial system to be strong.

Caroline Lucas:**[77559]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish (a) all the companies that have received public money through the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF), (b) the full amount of funding each company has received through the CCFF since its inception and (c) the criteria the Bank of England will use to make decisions on any increases to an issuer's CCFF limit.

John Glen:

The Bank of England publish the names of all the companies who have outstanding funds through the CCFF, each week on a Thursday at the following website:

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/bank-of-england-market-operations-guide/results-and-usage-data>

This is a unique level of transparency, equivalent schemes in the Eurozone and United States do not publish the names of scheme users.

In order to have an extension to the issuers limit, the company will need to demonstrate that the increased limit will be used to support them through the Covid-19 crisis. Due to the nature of the increased risk to the taxpayer, for such an increase to be considered there would be detailed engagement between the company and HM Government to understand, for example, if the company has sought alternative sources of financing, and to discuss repayment strategies.

■ **Credit****Stella Creasy:****[76682]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Financial Conduct Authority issuing guidance on communicating the (a)

potential effect on credit score, (b) potential sale of debts to collection agencies and (c) other risks of buy now pay later products to people considering using those products.

John Glen:

On 12 November 2019, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) introduced new rules for the buy now pay later market following its high-cost credit review. The rules prevent firms from charging backdated interest on the amount repaid by the customer during the offer period, requires that promotions contain balanced and appropriate information, and means that firms must give customers prompts to remind them when offers are due to end.

The FCA continues to monitor the buy now pay later market to identify areas that may cause consumers harm and will issue further guidance whenever it deems it necessary.

■ **Customs: Northern Ireland**

Louise Haigh:

[\[77696\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate HMRC has made of the number of traders that will make customs declarations for the first time in Northern Ireland as a result of the Northern Ireland protocol.

Jesse Norman:

Declaration volumes will depend on how businesses choose to operate, and HMRC are engaging with industry to understand their operating models.

For traders importing into Northern Ireland the Government has announced a major package of investment to help traders engaging in new processes under the Protocol. At the centre of this package is a new, free-to-use Trader Support Service (TSS) - an end-to-end support service which will educate traders on what the Protocol means for them and complete import and safety and security declarations on their behalf.

The TSS will be backed by funding of up to £200m, enabling businesses of all sizes who move goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland or import goods into Northern Ireland from the Rest of the World to draw on the support it provides.

The Government has been actively engaging with businesses and has committed to giving businesses the information and support needed to be ready to make changes at the end of the transition period.

Louise Haigh:

[\[77697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate HMRC has made of the number of traders in Great Britain that will make customs declarations for trade with Northern Ireland for the first time as a result of the Northern Ireland protocol arrangements.

Jesse Norman:

Declaration volumes will depend on how businesses choose to operate, and HMRC are engaging with industry to understand their operating models.

The Government's Command Paper sets out that trade from Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK should take place as it does now. There should be no additional processes, paperwork or restrictions on Northern Ireland goods arriving in the rest of the UK. There will be unfettered access, as provided for by the Protocol.

The Government has also been clear that there will be no export or exit declarations for goods leaving the rest of the UK for Northern Ireland

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The Government has been actively engaging with businesses and has committed to giving businesses the information and support needed to be ready to make changes at the end of the transition period.

■ Cycling: Voucher Schemes

Matt Western:

[\[77767\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse has been of the Cycle to Work scheme in each of the last five years; and what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of that scheme in each of the next two years.

Jesse Norman:

In May 2020, the cost of the Cycle to Work scheme in 2018/19 was published in the Non-Structural Tax Relief statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/main-tax-expenditures-and-structural-reliefs>

In addition to this, the cost of the Cycle to Work scheme (rounded to nearest £5m) for each of the last five years has been estimated as follows:

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
55	50	50	45	50

The cost of the Cycle to Work scheme for the next two years has not been estimated.

■ Disability Aids: Visual Impairment

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[78631\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to food of a kind used for human consumption.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78632\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to children's clothes.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78633\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to children's shoes.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78636\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to clothes for babies.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78644\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to equipment for blind or partially sighted people.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78645\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to incontinence products.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78646\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to low vision aids.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78647\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to emptying domestic septic tanks and cesspools.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[78648\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to water supplied to households.

Wes Streeting: [\[78747\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to renovating a dwelling that has been empty for at least two years.

Wes Streeting: [\[78750\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to smoking cessation products.

Wes Streeting: [\[78751\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to the installation of mobility aids for the elderly for use in domestic accommodation.

Wes Streeting: [\[78752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to supplies of magnetic tape adapted for recording speech for blind people.

Wes Streeting: [\[78753\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to motorcycle helmets that meet safety standards.

Wes Streeting: [\[78754\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to cycle helmets marked CE.

Wes Streeting: [\[78755\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to maps and charts.

Wes Streeting: [\[78756\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to printed music.

Wes Streeting: [\[78757\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to newspapers.

Wes Streeting: [\[78758\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to books.

Wes Streeting: [\[78762\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to magazines.

Jesse Norman:

There are no current plans to change the rate of VAT applied to:

- Magazines
- Renovating a dwelling that has been empty for at least two years
- Smoking cessation products
- Installation of mobility aids for the elderly for use in domestic accommodation
- Supplies of magnetic tape adapted for recording speech for blind people
- Motorcycle helmets that meet safety standards
- Cycle helmets marked CE
- Maps and charts
- Printed music

- Newspapers
- Books
- Food of a kind used for human consumption
- Children's clothes
- Children's shoes
- Clothes for babies
- Equipment for blind or partially sighted people
- Incontinence products
- Low Vision aids
- Emptying domestic septic tanks and cesspools
- Water supplied to households.

There are limits to the changes the Government can make to the VAT treatment of these goods under the framework of European law. While the UK is in the transition period, all existing EU VAT rules will continue to apply. Although all taxes are kept under review, there are no plans to change these reliefs at this time.

■ Economic Situation

Seema Malhotra:

[77628]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of appointing a senior minister with responsibility for financial wellbeing.

John Glen:

The Government aims to ensure that people across the UK have good financial wellbeing. It does this by supporting individuals' financial capability so they can access the guidance they need and develop the skills and confidence to successfully manage their finances. It is also a priority for the Government to promote financial inclusion and ensure that consumers can access useful and affordable financial products and services, which also contributes to having a positive financial wellbeing.

Within Government, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury has policy responsibility for the financial inclusion, financial education, financial advice, money guidance and debt advice. The Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion holds responsibility for pensions and pensions guidance. The Economy Secretary and the Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion also co-chair the Government's Financial Inclusion Policy Forum, which brings together leaders on financial inclusion to ensure collaboration between government and the sector.

Money and pensions guidance is delivered through the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), an arms-length body of the Department of Work and Pensions. MaPS was established in January 2019, merging the three former organisations providing free-to-use financial guidance to simplify the existing public financial guidance landscape and offer more holistic support to consumers. MaPS also has a statutory function to

develop and coordinate the UK's strategy on financial capability and as such recently published its "National Financial Wellbeing Strategy", which sets out goals to improve the UK's financial wellbeing over the next ten years.

■ Education: Charities

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[78783\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support educational charities; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of (a) extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for and (b) a package of support for educational charities whose operations will not be able to return to normal until January 2021 at the earliest.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will continue until 31 October. This Scheme must be temporary, and we must ensure people can get back to work when it is safe to do so and get the UK economy up and running again.

Many charities and social enterprises have benefitted from existing measures to support employers and businesses. Under these measures, charities have deferred VAT bills and will pay no business rates for their shops next year. In April the Government announced a £750 million support package for charities. £360 million of funding will be allocated directly to charities providing essential services and supporting vulnerable people including children and young people, while £370 million will be available to local charities including through the National Lottery Community Fund.

In addition, the Government has announced a £1 billion catch-up package to help teachers support those who have fallen behind while out of school and over £100 million to support remote learning.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Barbara Keeley:

[\[78600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to support employed people from (a) 1 August 2020, (b) 1 September 2020 and (c) 1 October 2020 who (i) are over the age of 60 years and (ii) were formerly on the Government's Shielded Patient List to maintain their employment relationship with their employer until it is safe to return to work as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[78601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to support employers from (a) 1 August 2020, (b) 1 September 2020 and (c) 1 October 2020 who have employees who (i) are over the age of 60 years and (ii) were formerly on the Government's Shielded Patient List to maintain their employment relationship with their employees until it is safe for those employees to return to work as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Barbara Keeley:

[78602]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to ensure that people who (a) are over the age of 60 years and (b) were formerly on the Government's Shielded Patient List maintain their incomes and do not find themselves in avoidable personal debt or living in poverty as a result of it not being safe for them to return to work from 1 August 2020 as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Jesse Norman:

From 1 August the Government has relaxed national advice to those shielding, bringing it in line with the advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. The advice is still to stay at home as much as possible. However, if they are unable to work from home they will be able to return, 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 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) should be provided with the safest onsite roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the CEV will continue to have access to the unprecedented package of financial support. This is not limited to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, but also includes the introduction of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme and an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £9.3bn according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates. Individuals over the State Pension age may be eligible for the State Pension.

■ Exports: Protective Clothing

John McNally:

[77685]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the UK is exporting fabric for use in personal protective equipment.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly as a National Statistic: the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics.

However, the trade data collected does not enable HMRC to determine the ultimate end use of exported goods, and so cannot be used to confirm whether fabric is exported for use in personal protective equipment.

There is aggregated trade data available for fabrics on HMRC's [uktradeinfo.com](https://www.uktradeinfo.com) website, under 'Build your own data tables'. The site also contains a 'Help' function with information on how to extract trade data.

Trade data relating to the value of textiles and textile articles, including fabrics, can be searched for using commodity codes in chapters 50 to 63 of the Trade Tariff:

<https://www.trade-tariff.service.gov.uk/sections>.

■ Further Education: Public Works Loan Board**Hilary Benn:** [\[77522\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allow further education colleges access to borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Barclay:

Loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) should support Local Authorities to deliver services, build and maintain housing, and regenerate their local areas. Only Local Authorities have access to PWLB loans and HM Treasury has no plans to extend the provision of PWLB loans to other organisations.

At Budget 2020, the Government announced it will invest £1.5 billion (£1.8 billion including indicative Barnett consequentials) over five years in capital spending to refurbish Further Education colleges, of which £200m has been brought forward for spend in the current financial year. The Government has continued to pay grant funded providers their scheduled payments for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

■ Gyms: VAT**Stella Creasy:** [\[76680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the VAT reduction for the hospitality and leisure sectors to yoga and fitness studios and gyms.

Jesse Norman:

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Chancellor has introduced a range of measures to help individuals and businesses through the crisis, including grants, loans and relief from business rates at a cost of more than £300 billion.

The temporary reduced rate of VAT will support the tourism and hospitality sectors and will help over 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs. Expanding the scope of the temporary VAT reduction would come at a considerable cost to the Exchequer. However, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

■ Heating: VAT**Wes Streeting:** [\[78743\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to ground source heat pumps installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Wes Streeting: [\[78744\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to wood-fuelled boilers installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Wes Streeting: [\[78745\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to air source heat pumps installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[78899\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he proposes to change the rate of VAT applied to insulation installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[78900\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to change the rate of VAT applied to solar panels installed on dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[78901\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to change the rate of VAT applied to water and wind turbines installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [\[78902\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to change the rate of VAT applied to micro combined heat and power units installed in dwellings and buildings used for a residential purpose.

Jesse Norman:

Under current VAT rules, the installation of water and wind turbines is subject to the standard rate of VAT. However, the installation of other energy saving materials (ESMs) remains subject to the reduced rate of VAT when certain conditions are met.

Although there are no plans to extend the scope of the relief already in place, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

Wes Streeting: [\[78746\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to electricity for domestic and residential use or for non-business use by a charity.

Jesse Norman:

Under the current VAT rules, electricity for domestic use is subject to the reduced rate of 5 per cent. Although all taxes are kept under constant review, the Government has no current plans to change the VAT treatment of electricity.

■ Insolvency**Imran Ahmad Khan:** [\[78905\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) deferring the re-introduction of Crown Preference for 12 months and (b) capping the amount of reserves which will go to cover Crown Preference to a maximum of £1 million.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's reforms to HMRC's preferential creditor status do *not* restore full "Crown Preference". The Government has taken a proportionate approach, applying changes only to taxes paid in good faith by employees and customers, but held temporarily by the business, including Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Income Tax and VAT. This balances the interests of taxpayers, the Exchequer and other creditors. These reforms are not expected to have a significant impact on financial institutions, the lending market or the wider economy.

Businesses have had ample time to prepare for the changes. These reforms were first announced in 2018, and implementation has already been delayed from April 2020 to December 2020. The tax businesses temporarily hold on behalf of their customers and staff is not business income. It is right that the reforms do not include a "cap", but apply to all relevant tax debts held temporarily by the business.

International Monetary Fund: Lebanon**John Howell:**[\[76657\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 71019 on Loans: Lebanon, if he will make representations to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the potential misuse of IMF loan packages in Lebanon by Hezbollah.

John Glen:

HMT officials are in discussion with the IMF, through the UK's delegation at the IMF, on the situation in Lebanon and options for IMF economic support. Any new programme needs to be agreed with a new Government, who will succeed the current caretaker arrangement, to ensure that all commitments can be delivered and implemented. No new programme is able to be proposed at this interim stage, so a formal view on the adequacy of safeguards is not possible.

Members: Correspondence**Alan Brown:**[\[78732\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Financial Secretary to the Treasury plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun of 5 June 2020 on self support payments for sole trader directors paid by dividends.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury responded to the Member's letter on 7 August.

Overseas Trade**Paul Blomfield:**[\[77589\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his timeframe is for publishing information on which border points will be operating a (a) pre-lodgement or (b) temporary storage model for clearing goods entering, leaving or transiting the UK.

Jesse Norman:

Border points are responsible for deciding how they want to ensure customs control requirements are met to meet full customs controls from July 2021. THEY will be able to use a temporary storage model or pre-lodgement model. HMRC are working with border points to help them decide which model is best for them but this is a commercial decision for each to make based on their own unique circumstances.

Where pre-lodgement of declarations may be mandated by legislation, details of those border points will be published in a notice on gov.uk at least 30 days before the legislation comes into force.

Paul Blomfield:[\[77593\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect on the adequacy of control over goods entering the UK of the proposed system for deferred declarations in locations without an existing control system.

Paul Blomfield:[\[77595\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what evidence will be required under the proposed Border Operating Model for companies to demonstrate a good compliance record enabling them to defer customs declarations.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's priority is to keep goods moving and avoid delays at the border. As the customs authority, HMRC will act to ensure that border processes are as smooth as possible, without compromising security. From 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021 most traders importing non-controlled goods will be able to defer customs declarations for 180 days. Like importers of controlled goods, traders with a poor compliance record will not be allowed to defer declarations and must complete full customs declarations at the time of import.

HMRC is planning a package of activities to support and educate traders on their obligations during this period. HMRC will promote the keeping of good records, which will be crucial in minimising losses to error once supplementary declarations are made. HMRC will also have the power to ask for a trader's records to check that they have made adequate entries.

HMRC has existing tools in place to tackle non-compliance. These tools include risk-based pre- and post-clearance checks, regular monitoring of high-risk traders and their supply chains and providing education to traders on risks and issues identified. Traders or individuals with a poor compliance history will be contacted by HMRC and will be instructed that they will not be able to defer declarations. The Government will publish further information on what constitutes a poor compliance history soon.

■ Public Expenditure

Harriett Baldwin: [\[77598\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of the Prospective Regulation exemption limit of 8 million euros for secondary public offerings.

John Glen:

The Prospectus Regulation is directly applicable EU legislation. The Regulation permits Member States to exempt offers of securities to the public, up to a maximum threshold of 8 million euros, from the obligation to produce a prospectus. In 2018, the government elected to set this threshold at its highest level.

The Prospectus Regulation also contains easements specific to secondary offerings, including a simplified prospectus document with lighter requirements.

■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[78924\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much additional funding has been allocated to Northern Ireland through Barnett consequentials as a result of the Government response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

On 24 July we made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the devolved administrations. We guaranteed that they will receive at least £12.7bn in additional funding for this year, £2.2bn of which is for the Northern Ireland Executive.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Theresa Villiers: [\[76629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing specific support to wet-led pubs to help them recover from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[76775\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing additional support to wet-led pubs based in town centres that will not benefit from the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and who have reduced revenues as a result of people working from home during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The hospitality sector, including wet-led pubs, continues to have access to a range of government support measures including, but not limited to:

- A 12-month business rates holiday for all eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England, saving around 350,000 ratepayers a combined £10bn.
- A VAT deferral for up to 12 months

- Measures to make it easier to claim back duty on spoiled beer, wine and cider.
- A business grant worth £10,000 or £25,000 for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), which has supported 1.4 million jobs across the hospitality sector and which runs until October
- Protection for commercial leaseholders against automatic forfeiture for non-payment until September 30, 2020
- Access to affordable, government backed finance through Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBLS) for and larger firms, along with the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises.

In addition to this unprecedented package of support for businesses, the Summer Economic Update announced a VAT rate reduction from 20% to 5% - worth £4.1bn – for hospitality, accommodation and attractions, and the £500m Eat Out to Help Out scheme which entitles every diner to a 50% discount of up to £10 per head on their meal, at any participating restaurant, café or pub on Monday to Wednesdays throughout August. Over 85% of pubs serve food and will benefit from both schemes. All pubs, including wet-led pubs will also benefit from the proposed regulatory easements in the Business and Planning Bill, which will make it easier, quicker and cheaper to set up furniture in adjacent outdoor spaces and to automatically convert all current licenses to allow pubs to sell off-licence.

■ Sanitary Protection: VAT

Alison Thewliss:

[\[77686\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will include (a) period pants and (b) other reusable menstrual products within the VAT reduction covering menstrual products.

Jesse Norman:

At Spring Budget on 11 March 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that a zero rate of VAT will apply to women's sanitary products from 1 January 2021, at the end of the transition period. This will apply to those products which are currently subject to the reduced rate of 5%, for example, tampons and pads, and to reusable menstrual products, such as keepers.

■ Shipping: Repairs and Maintenance

Wes Streeting:

[\[78759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to ship repairs and maintenance.

Wes Streeting:

[\[78760\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to aircraft repair and maintenance.

Jesse Norman:

The repair and maintenance of qualifying ships and aircraft already benefit from zero-rating of VAT; further information is contained in VAT notice 744C. There are no plans to change the VAT treatment of ships and aircraft at present.

■ State Retirement Pensions**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[77830\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will he make it his policy to maintain the triple lock on state pensions.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is committed to ensuring that older people are able to live with the dignity and respect they deserve, and the State Pension is the foundation of state support for older people.

As with all aspects of Government policy, any decisions on future changes to the Triple Lock will be taken as part of the annual Budget process in the context of the wider public finances.

■ Tourism: VAT**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[78785\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the reduced rate of VAT for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions to (a) travel and (b) holiday letting agencies.

Jesse Norman:

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Chancellor has introduced a range of measures to help individuals and businesses through the crisis, including grants, loans and relief from business rates at a cost of more than £300 billion.

Property agencies are included in the temporary reduced rate provided that the contract is between the customer and the agent, and that the agent has the power to grant someone a licence to occupy holiday accommodation. Passenger transport for more than 10 people is ordinarily zero-rated for VAT purposes.

Expanding the scope of the temporary VAT reduction would come at a considerable cost to the Exchequer. However, the Government keeps all taxes under review.

■ Universal Credit**Neil Gray:**[\[77647\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on proposals to introduce non-repayable grants on qualification for universal credit.

Steve Barclay:

Universal Credit offers tailored financial support that reflects claimants' personal circumstances. No one has to wait for a first Universal Credit payment, with new

claimants able to request additional support through an advance if they need it. Advances can be repaid over a year, allowing new claimants to receive 13 payments during that period instead of 12. Budgeting support is also available for anyone who needs extra help managing their finances.

■ Urban Areas: Cycling and Walking

Geraint Davies:

[\[76557\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the potential for improved walking and cycling infrastructure to increase footfall on local high streets.

Steve Barclay:

To support our high streets throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has provided over £10.5 billion from the Small Business Grant Fund. In addition, to make it easier and safer to walk and cycle, the government has announced a £2 billion package, which includes £225 million in emergency funding for local authorities to help them create pop up cycle lanes and re-allocate road space.

■ VAT

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[78630\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change VAT arrangements in the UK after the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

From 1 January 2021, the UK will need to introduce new arrangements for VAT at its borders. New measures for movements of goods within and into Great Britain were published on 20 July, and the treatment of travellers with personal goods, which was recently subject to consultation, will be made available in due course. The Government continues to work through the implications of the Northern Ireland Protocol, including in relation to VAT, and is committed to providing guidance on how the Northern Ireland Protocol will work ahead of the end of the transition period.

There are no further changes planned to domestic UK VAT law following the end of the transition period and any future changes are for the Chancellor to announce at fiscal events.

■ VAT: Registration

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[78629\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals in 2020 to implement the recommendations of the Office of Tax Simplification on reforming the turnover threshold for Value Added Tax registration by businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The case for change of the VAT registration threshold has been regularly reviewed over the years, and public views are divided. Whilst some argue that a lower threshold would provide a fairer competitive environment, others contend that a higher threshold would reduce financial and administrative burdens.

In 2018, the Government consulted on how the design of the VAT registration threshold could better incentivise growth and considered the effects of a smoothing mechanism, however there was no clear option for reform. The summary of responses to the call for evidence can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/vat-registration-threshold-call-for-evidence>.

At Budget 2018, the Government announced it would maintain the VAT registration threshold at £85,000 until March 2022.

■ Village Halls: Construction

Bridget Phillipson: [78640]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has change the rate of VAT applied to the construction of new village halls.

Bridget Phillipson: [78641]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to the conversion for a housing association of a non-residential building into a communal residential building.

Bridget Phillipson: [78642]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to domestic alterations to suit the condition of a resident with disabilities.

Bridget Phillipson: [78643]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to first time gas and electricity connections.

Wes Streeting: [78761]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to the renovation or alteration of empty residential premises.

Jesse Norman:

Consumers already benefit from a reduced VAT rate of 5 per cent on residential construction under certain conditions. This includes conversions of buildings from one use to another, and the renovation of properties that have been empty for two years or more prior to the renovation work.

Going further would be very expensive: reducing VAT on all property renovation, repairs and improvements would cost the Exchequer approximately £6 billion per

year. Although all taxes are kept under review, the Government has no plans to change the VAT treatment of construction at this time.

WALES

■ Air Passenger Duty: Wales

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[78824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether he has had recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues on the devolution of air passenger duty to the Welsh Government.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues, including fiscal policy. There are currently no plans to change Air Passenger Duty policy in relation to Wales. As with all taxes, HM Treasury will keep this under review.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Gender: Marketing

Christine Jardine:

[\[78828\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps she is taking to tackle differential pricing of similar products and services that are marketed to a particular gender.

Kemi Badenoch:

Unlawful discrimination because of sex is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010. However, the differential pricing of products marketed towards men or women is not unlawful discrimination: there is no requirement on anyone to buy a product because it has been marketed to them on the basis of their gender.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Access to Work Programme

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[77706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the average length of time taken by her Department to process an Access to Work scheme application from a disabled person; and what the longest average length of time taken by her Department has been to process an Access to Work scheme application from a disabled person since 19 December 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[77707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who applied to the Access to Work scheme in the last 12 months (a) classified themselves as disabled or with a long-term health condition, (b) were in full-time employment at the time of their application and (c) were asking to work from home as part of their Access to Work support; how many of those applicants received some or all of the support that they asked for; and what the average time frame was for the delivery of that support.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statistical information about Access to Work is published annually. The most recent data were published in September 2019 and can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/access-to-work-statistics-april-2007-to-march-2019>.

The next set of statistics are due to be published in September 2020, and will cover the twelve months to March 2020. Under the Code of Practice for Statistics the figures for 2020/21 cannot be released ahead of the official publication of the Access to Work Statistics. For this reason, it is not possible to provide figures for the period you have requested.

(a) Access to Work does not ask applicants whether they are in full time work. The employment criterion for eligibility is that the applicant has a paid job or is about to start or return to one.

(b) Access to Work does not ask applicants to specify whether they would describe themselves as a disabled person. The eligibility criteria for the scheme include the requirement that the applicant is affected by a health condition or disability that makes it hard for them to do parts of their job or get to and from work. The annual published statistics report the number of people who have received at least one Access to Work payment in a given financial year, including a breakdown by primary medical condition. More detail about the eligibility criteria for Access to Work may be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/eligibility>

(c) The data requested regarding how many Access to Work customers ask to work from home are not centrally held.

■ Access to Work Programme: Coronavirus

Vicky Foxcroft:

[77705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to respond to increases in the volume of claims for the Access to Work grant scheme as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

In recognition of the challenges COVID-19 may present, Access to Work has introduced a number of measures to support disabled people whether they are working from home, or returning to their workplaces. The new Blended Offer complements support provided by employers and contains a flexible mix of support,

including support to work from more than one location, a package of home working support which can be blended with workplace support, mental health support for people returning to work after a period of furlough or shielding, travel-to-work support where the individual's disability means social distancing on public transport is too risky and the prioritisation of applications from disabled people in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Group.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[77708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of whether there is a need to increase funding for the Access to Work scheme in response to the increase in the volume of applications to that scheme as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

Access to Work is a demand-led scheme. The measures that DWP has put in place during the COVID-19 outbreak have allowed the scheme to continue to support both existing and new customers.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[77711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the (a) number and (b) types of applications to the Access to Work scheme since March 2020 as a result of the imposition of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statistical information about Access to Work is published annually. The most recent data were published in September 2019 and can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/access-to-work-statistics-april-2007-to-march-2019>

The next set of statistics are due to be published in September 2020, and will cover the twelve months to March 2020.

Under the Code of Practice for Statistics, the figures for 2020/21 cannot be released ahead of the official publication date. For this reason, it is not possible to provide figures for the period you have requested.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Reviews

Lilian Greenwood:

[77585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on its Safeguarding Policy Review which was due for completion in Autumn 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

It would be inappropriate to comment on the Safeguarding review due to current legal proceedings. However, as part of our commitment to improving vulnerable customers' experience with the Department; we currently have 10 Senior Safeguarding Leaders in place and plan to have 25 in place by Autumn. They will work across all services and with key partners to support and deliver a consistent service to vulnerable

customers. We have also established the Customer Experience Directorate to co-ordinate policy development, guidance and learning as well as monitor the implementation of change.

■ Disability

Alison Thewliss:

[\[76774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to have a target for a proportion of the proposed additional job coach roles to be held by people with disabilities.

Mims Davies:

DWP is a disability confident, inclusive employer welcoming applications from all candidates through a fair and open approach to recruitment. The department operates a guaranteed interview scheme for candidates who have a disability, provided they can demonstrate that they meet the minimum criteria defined for the job. It is also committed to making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates throughout the selection process.

Helen Hayes:

[\[78771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish the National Strategy for Disabled People.

Justin Tomlinson:

Due to Covid 19 impacts, a slower timetable for publication of the National Strategy for Disabled People is inevitable. This is to ensure that we are able to meaningfully engage with stakeholders and strengthen our evidence base to deliver the ambitious strategy that the Prime Minister has called for. We are aiming to publish in Spring 2021.

■ Disability Living Allowance: Older People

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[77694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if the Government will allow people over 65 years of age to be reassessed for a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance if their needs have changed since they were assessed before the age of 65.

Justin Tomlinson:

Prior to the introduction of Personal Independence Payment for people of working age, the age limit for new claims to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) was age 65. A claimant, born on or before 8 April 1948, in receipt of DLA can continue to get the benefit beyond age 65 if they continue to satisfy the relevant disability tests. They can also apply for a higher rate of the care component if their care needs increase. People with mobility problems that arise only after they have reached age 65 cannot claim the mobility component for the first time nor can a claimant who was receiving a lower rate mobility component whose mobility needs increase move to the higher rate.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Marion Fellows:

[\[77691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy, what steps she is taking to ensure that disabled people can live independent lives as the UK recovers from the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Hayes:

[\[78772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on disabled people.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people using existing and new data sources.

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work has had discussions with charities, disabled people's organisations and individuals to understand the range of experiences disabled people have had during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the support needed as lockdown restrictions are eased.

We are ensuring that disabled people continue to have access to disability benefits, food, medicines, essentials, accessible communications, updated guidance, including workplace and transport related guidance, as well as financial and other support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Government continues to provide disability employment support through initiatives such as Access to Work, Disability Confident, the Work and Health Programme, Intensive Personalised Employment Support, and other forms of support that disabled people need to retain, adapt and move into employment.

The Cabinet Office Disability Unit continues to work with disability stakeholders and across Government Departments to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered in the UK Government's response to COVID-19. We are clear that consideration of equality impacts must be integral in all key policy decisions. All equality and discrimination laws and obligations continue to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will publish the National Strategy for Disabled People taking into account the impacts of the pandemic on disabled people. The Strategy will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including employment, housing, education and transport.

Christine Jardine:

[\[77775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment the Government has made of the adequacy of the covid-19 recovery strategy for supporting disabled people; whether that strategy is aligned with the National Strategy for Disabled People; and whether the National Strategy for Disabled People will be amended to take

account of existing inequalities for disabled people that have been exacerbated by the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

As required under the Equalities Act, the Government has considered the impact of all measures, including those set out in 'Our plan to rebuild', on groups with protected characteristics. The Government recognises that disabled people may have been disproportionately impacted by certain restriction measures and will have particular needs that must be accommodated on the road to recovery. These have been considered as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty process.

We will publish the National Strategy for Disabled People taking into account the impacts of the pandemic on disabled people. The Strategy will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including employment, housing, education and transport.

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Grahame Morris:

[77567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the job finding support service referred to in paragraph 2.19 of the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs, published on 8 July 2020, will be provided by (a) current work coaches or (b) put out to tender.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department for Work and Pensions plans to carry out a commercial exercise, compliant with public procurement regulations. More details will be announced in due course.

Marion Fellows:

[77693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that all businesses provide reasonable adjustments for (a) disabled employees and (b) people at higher risk from covid-19 as employees return to their workplaces.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[77710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department has issued to employers on reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the event that employees are working from home as a result of the Government's covid-19 guidance during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the Hon. Members to question 62298 answered by my Hon. Friend the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets on 30th June.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-22/62298/>

I can further advise, DWP's new Employer Help site provides advice on employment of disabled people, explaining how Access to Work and Disability Confident can help businesses to ensure their practices are fair and inclusive.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[78531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is available to people whose covid-19 symptoms have extended beyond two weeks and are unable to return to work as a result.

Justin Tomlinson:

Individuals should tell their employer that symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) persist and that they must continue to self-isolate.

Individuals will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they have tested positive for coronavirus and are staying at home and self-isolating for 10 days, or until they no longer have symptoms, and they are not able to work as a result. Other SSP eligibility criteria will apply. Individuals should continue to self-isolate beyond 10 days if they still have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste.

Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support, for example where they are not eligible for SSP, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on their individual circumstances.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[78741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to monitor the effect of the ending of the shielding programme on levels of employment among disabled and vulnerable people.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are monitoring the employment of a number of groups, including disabled people, using the quarterly Labour Force Survey along with other relevant sources throughout the pandemic. There will however be a lag until the data needed to fully assess any effects of easing lockdown restrictions on disabled and vulnerable people's employment becomes available. We do know from Opinions and Lifestyle Survey * that lower proportions of disabled people report that COVID-19 has affected their job in comparison to non-disabled respondents (27.1% vs 50.2%). This may reflect a lower proportion of disabled people are in work. We will continue to monitor these issues alongside the wider labour market experiences of both disabled and vulnerable people.

When out of work, we know that disabled people tend to find it more difficult to get jobs. That is why we are actively working on policies to prevent ill-health related job losses, and to provide specific employment support for disabled people both in and out of work.

*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsondisabledpeopleingreatbritain/may2020>

■ Employment: Disability**Vicky Foxcroft:** [77702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how her Department monitors whether disabled workers receive the reasonable adjustments that they are entitled to under the Equality Act 2010 as distinct from the adjustments that her Department funds through the Access to Work scheme; and whether her Department collects or holds data that provides assurance that disabled workers receive those reasonable adjustments in a timely manner.

Justin Tomlinson:

Periodically, the Department undertakes research which enables activity on workplace adjustments to be examined. For example, a 2014 survey of employees found that 61 per cent of those who reported having a health condition and/or a sickness absence lasting more than two weeks had received workplace adjustments of some kind.

Among employees who had adjustments made, just over half (55 per cent) reported that their employer made adjustments as soon as they were made aware of their health condition. A further third (33 per cent) of employees reported that their employer did not make adjustments until after a period of sickness absence, and 20 per cent only after their GP recommended changes.

Source: Health and wellbeing at work: a survey of employees, 2014. Research Report 901. DWP; 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-wellbeing-at-work-survey-of-employees>

Vicky Foxcroft: [77703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people applied for reasonable adjustments from their employer in the last 12 months; and what number and proportion of those applying for reasonable adjustments were (a) granted those adjustments and (b) did not receive a response from their employer.

Vicky Foxcroft: [77704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information her Department holds on what the average length of time is for a worker applying for reasonable adjustments to receive a response to that request in the last 12 months.

Justin Tomlinson:

We do not hold the information requested.

■ Independent Serious Case Panel**Lilian Greenwood:** [77587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 18385 on Independent Serious Case Panel, if she will publish the agenda for each meeting of the Independent Serious Case Panel since 2018.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Serious Case Panel now considers systemic themes and issues taken from serious cases, rather than the specific cases themselves. The Serious Case Panel in its new form met on 19 March 2020 and 2 July 2020. The Terms of Reference for the Panel and the minutes of the meetings from the 19 March and the 2 July are published on Gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dwp-serious-case-panel>).

Lilian Greenwood:**[77588]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2020 to Question 18385 on Independent Serious Case Panel, if she will publish the qualifications the independent members have for membership of the panel.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Serious Case Panel is comprised of the DWP Permanent Secretary, DWP Directors General and the Independent Case Examiner. The membership of the Senior Executive Team on the Panel ensures views from all parts of DWP business are represented. This allows actions and recommendations at the Panel to be driven through the Department. Independent members provide additional external expertise. External experts might be invited to support specific discussions at the Panel where this is appropriate.

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Jobcentres**Chris Stephens:****[R] [78729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of safety screens installed at jobcentres; and whether her Department has received any reports of such screens being unfit for purpose.

Mims Davies:

In order to provide additional protection to both colleagues and the public against droplets potentially containing coronavirus, following BEIS guidance and the completion of risk assessments a mitigation of a physical barrier is required during extended face to face customer interactions. There have been no reports or incidents that would suggest the screen design is not fit for purpose.

■ Jobcentres: Coronavirus**Grahame Morris:****[77566]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with trade unions on the reopening of job centres in (a) Northern Ireland, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

Mims Davies:

Jobcentres have remained open to support our most vulnerable claimants throughout this pandemic, providing a service, in accordance with PHE and Devolved Government guidelines on social distancing, to vulnerable claimants unable to access our services through digital/telephony channels.

We are currently completing a programme of implementing safety measures, including provision of screens and signage, across our Jobcentres allowing us to extend our face to face service. We remain open for those who need us but will continue to minimise the requirement for customers to travel to our Jobcentres, conducting the majority of interactions digitally or by phone.

The department has widely discussed plans to extend our face to face service with Trade Union at National, Regional and local levels

We have been in regular dialogue with the unions on the reopening of Jobcentres nationally over the last few weeks. We held a meeting with DTUS on plans for Scotland on Monday 13th July. This was at short notice in response to TU concerns that this was being pursued without proper consultation.

We then wrote to DTUS on 15th July with further detail on planning for the roll-out in both Scotland and Wales. We continue to meet with DTUS twice weekly so there is a regular opportunity for further discussion where needed.

Please note that the DWP is only responsible for benefits in Great Britain. Social security benefits are a devolved matter in Northern Ireland. Questions about benefits in Northern Ireland should be directed to the Department of Communities in Northern Ireland

■ Jobcentres: Staff

Grahame Morris:

[\[77568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) duration and (b) delivery method of training for new work coaches will be as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Mims Davies:

DWP is committed to providing new Work Coaches with the technical knowledge, skills and behaviours to be able to provide a high quality service to our claimants.

The current methodology follows a learn, consolidate, learn approach through virtual classroom delivery by learning development officers, followed by consolidation in the live working environment.

The end to end Work Coach learning journey is 52 days, consisting of 32 days in virtual in class learning, delivered over 5 parts, with 20 days' consolidation with the business split between each in class period.

We are though reviewing our learning approach for Work Coaches through the summer to see if there are alternative approaches that could enhance the learning.

Grahame Morris:

[\[77569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether contracts for new work coaches in her Department will be (a) full-time or part-time and (b) short-term or permanent.

Mims Davies:

DWP will offer Work Coach roles on both a full-time and part-time basis, in line with the DWP flexible working policy.

Recruitment will be a blend of permanent roles, and fixed term appointments.

■ Jobcentres: West Midlands**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[78809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches will be recruited in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands.

Mims Davies:

It is too soon in the recruitment process to be able to identify specific numbers for each city or location. Recruitment will be targeted based on local demand, plus current available and emerging estate space and Job Centre operating model changes.

Central England & Wales region (which covers Birmingham and the West Midlands) plan to recruit c1,200 new work coaches. This will be between now and the end of October in the first wave of recruitment, further planned recruitment later in the year will grow these numbers.

■ National Insurance: Foreign Nationals**Christine Jardine:**[\[76859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the procedure is for foreign nationals wishing to apply for a national insurance number; for what reasons her Department has not made provision for virtual interviews for foreign nationals wishing to apply for a national insurance number during the covid-19 outbreak; whether she plans for such virtual interviews to begin in lieu of physical interviews and, if so, on what date; and what assessment she has made of trends in the number of foreign nationals being turned down for work as a result of employers' concerns about making a mistake on a potential employee's right to work due to their not being in possession of a national insurance number.

Justin Tomlinson:

When applying for a National Insurance Number (NINo), all applicants are required to have their identity verified. For those applicants whose identity has already been verified by another UK Government Department, primarily Home Office, their applications are dealt with by post. For those who have not had their identity verified, primarily EU/EEA nationals, the current process requires them to attend a face to face interview with DWP to verify their identity.

Due to COVID-19, the face to face interview process was suspended from 17th March 2020. This enabled us to redeploy a large number of staff to help process the substantial number of benefit claims received during this period.

It is not possible, due to the requirement to examine ID documents, to offer a virtual service. However, we are working on a digital solution that, once in place, will enable us to restart the process. Our current plan is for that to be in place by the end of September 2020.

Employers are required to conduct mandatory Right to Work checks on all prospective employees. Having a NINo is not part of these checks, and the possession of a NINo does not prove that an individual has a right to work. Indeed, an individual can apply for a job and take up employment without a NINo. I have included a link to the guidance on Right to Work checks that is provided to employers by the Home Office.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide>

The Department does not hold information on the number of foreign nationals who may have been turned down for work as a result of not having a NINo.

■ Social Security Benefits

Lilian Greenwood:

[77586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 592 on Social Security Benefits, on what dates the Independent Serious Case Panel has met since 7 November 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Serious Case Panel now considers systemic themes and issues taken from serious cases, rather than the specific cases themselves. The Serious Case Panel in its new form met on 19 March 2020 and 2 July 2020. The Terms of Reference for the Panel and the minutes of the meetings from the 19 March and the 2 July are published on Gov.uk (<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dwp-serious-case-panel>).

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Stephen Timms:

[77500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to continue (a) paper and (b) telephone assessments for (i) personal independence payment and (ii) disability living allowance after the covid-19 outbreak; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

Paper based assessments of entitlement to Disability Living Allowance have always been offered in preference to other forms of assessment and will continue as normal.

Paper based assessments have also always been a feature of Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Face-to-face assessment are currently suspended and are being kept under review. We will be considering the next steps for PIP assessments and how we could re-introduce face-to-face assessments when it is

safe and operationally feasible to do so, our key priority being the health and safety of our claimants and our staff.

Deidre Brock:

[78723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how she plans to support claimants with long-term symptoms from contracting covid-19.

Justin Tomlinson:

Claimants with long term health conditions or disabilities, whether or not they are experiencing symptoms directly arising from infection with Covid-19, may be supported in a range of ways through social security benefits and other support measures, depending on their particular circumstances. Up-to-date information about the support available for individuals can be found on GOV.UK:

Newly unemployed claimants

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-you-were-employed-and-have-lost-your-job>

Moving into work

<https://www.gov.uk/moving-from-benefits-to-work>

Personal Independence Payment

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

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Stephen Timms:

[77502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Written Statement of 9 July 2020, WS 353, whether she plans to permit disability benefit claimants to choose a face-to-face, telephone or paper assessment; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are considering the next steps for assessments when public health advice allows face to face assessments to be re-introduced. We are using a range of information to inform these decisions, including research with PIP and ESA/UC claimants about their experiences of telephone assessments, which will take place over the Summer. Further discussions with stakeholders will also be welcomed to ensure we take a range of views into consideration.

Selaine Saxby:

[78929]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 9 July 2020, Health Transformation Programme update, HCWS353, what plans her Department has to continue providing (a) paper, (b) telephone and (c) other methods of disability benefit assessments to claimants of (i) personal independence payments and (ii) disability living allowance; and whether she plans to extend such methods of assessment to claimants of (A) employment and support allowance and (B) universal credit.

Justin Tomlinson:

Paper based assessments of entitlement to Disability Living Allowance have always been offered in preference to other forms of assessment and will continue as normal. Paper based assessments have also always been a feature of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and are undertaken where there is sufficient evidence. Where possible and in line with usual processes, a paper-based assessment will be undertaken. In PIP we will continue to do telephone-based assessments where necessary.

Paper based reviews have also always been a feature of Work Capability Assessments for UC and ESA. Wherever possible, if there is sufficient evidence available, our Assessment Provider will make a recommendation based on a paper-based review. If this is not possible, our provider will currently look to offer a telephone assessment, where appropriate.

We remain fully committed to making continuous improvements to the support we provide to people with health conditions and disabilities, and are evaluating the changes to our assessment approach which were temporarily introduced. This will inform the approach taken to conducting assessments in the future. We are using a range of information to inform these decisions, including research with PIP and ESA/UC claimants about their experiences of telephone assessments.

Selaine Saxby:[\[78930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 9 July 2020 by the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, what plans her Department has to enable claimants to decide which method of disability benefit assessment they have.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are considering the next steps for assessments when public health advice allows face to face assessments to be re-introduced. We are using a range of information to inform these decisions, including research with PIP and ESA/UC claimants about their experiences of telephone assessments, which will take place over the Summer. Further discussions with stakeholders will also be welcomed to ensure we take a range of views into consideration.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**[\[78683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer of 24 February to Question 725, what plans she has to extend the Yellow Card warning system to other locations across the United Kingdom.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[78684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish an assessment of the effectiveness of a Yellow Card warning system based on the Proof of Concepts undertaken by her Department.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[78685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to work with Feeding Britain to identify additional locations in which to pilot a Yellow Card warning system.

Mims Davies:

The Department committed to look at processes to give claimants a written warning, instead of a sanction, for a first sanctionable failure to attend a Work-Search Review and to undertake a series of small-scale Proof of Concepts of this warning system. The Department would like to complete all testing before making an assessment of the merits of extending such a system.

We have now gathered internal staff feedback on the first Proof of Concept and we are looking at informing our next steps. As this was a small proof of concept, we do not plan to publish this feedback.

Sites for future stages of the Proof of Concept are chosen in such a way that ensures we are able to assess the concept / policy under consideration. To do this effectively we consider what data can be collected from the site, whether the site is appropriate given its characteristics and if this can be done in a manner to ensure findings are sufficiently robust.

Neil Coyle:

[\[78689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the reinstatement of the claimant commitment on 1 July 2020, how the findings of the Proof of Concept pilot which took place in the summer of 2019 will inform the reintroduction of the claimant commitment; and she will publish the findings of that pilot.

Mims Davies:

The health conditionality Proof of Concept (PoC) ran in 29 jobcentres from September 2019 to February 2020. We have now obtained staff feedback on the PoC and are considering our next steps.

■ Social Security Benefits: Immigrants

Neil Coyle:

[\[78688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants who previously had access to public funds have had their claims ended as a result of No Recourse to Public Funds conditions being imposed, in each of the last 10 years.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Illness

Munira Wilson:

[\[78867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions officials of her Department have had with officials of the Department of Health and Social Care on potential additional barriers people with mental health conditions experience as a result of the covid-19 outbreak when applying for social security benefits; and what safeguards her Department has put in place to mitigate against those potential additional barriers.

Justin Tomlinson:

Officials of both Departments hold regular discussions as a result of the ongoing covid-19 outbreak and its impact on people with health conditions.

My Department has provided mental health training for staff who have direct contact with claimants, including all Work Coaches, to equip them to identify mental wellbeing issues or vulnerabilities, and to take appropriate action to support individuals. Work Coaches will tailor support to the needs of the individual and work closely with local organisations that provide additional specialist support.

Background

Mental wellbeing training has been provided for all staff (around 30,000 colleagues trained to date) who have direct contact with customers (including via telephone).

Staff have also had specific training to help them to identify vulnerable people, and signpost or refer them to further support provided by local partners. Every jobcentre has a complex needs toolkit containing links to local organisations to facilitate this.

Since the start of the pandemic we've introduced online claim application processes for [ESA](#) and [Pension Credit](#) claimants (telephony options still exist). And we've also introduced [new services](#) for deaf claimants.

From 16 March to the end of April, we received over 1.8 million claims for Universal Credit, over 250,000 claims for Jobseeker's Allowance, and over 20,000 claims for Employment and Support Allowance.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Christine Jardine:

[\[77774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to publish the findings from the review announced in July 2019 on how the welfare system supports the terminally ill.

Justin Tomlinson:

The evaluation remains a priority for the Department. The Department has made good progress and we expect to be able to provide an update on the outcome of the evaluation shortly.

■ Universal Credit

Drew Hendry:

[76779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of extending the time frame beyond 30 days of the date of decision for the mandatory reconsideration of a universal credit decision to provide support agencies with a wider time frame to help people with that process.

Justin Tomlinson:

Whilst the time limit for applying for a Mandatory Reconsideration is one month, if an application is made within this period but more time is needed to provide supporting evidence, the claimant or their representative can ask that a decision is not made pending the provision of that evidence.

Neil Gray:

[77644]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of introducing non-repayable grants upon qualification for universal credit.

Neil Gray:

[77645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the merits of introducing non-repayable grants upon qualification for universal credit, to reduce the risk of fraud.

Neil Gray:

[77646]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing non-repayable grants upon qualification for universal credit, while maintaining the option of advance payments prior to qualification, to reduce the wait for a claimant's first payment of universal credit.

Will Quince:

No-one has to wait for a payment under Universal Credit (UC).

UC offers tailored financial support which dynamically adapts following each monthly assessment period, reflecting actual household circumstances. A non-repayable advance, or grant, would provide assistance to those in no immediate financial need and may encourage inappropriate or fraudulent claims to UC.

The current system of advances allows new claimants to request additional support during their first assessment period where needed. Advances can be repaid over a year, allowing new claimants to receive 13 payments during that period instead of 12. Budgeting support is available for anyone who needs extra help managing their finances.

In the year prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, around 55-60 per cent of new claims took up an advance. Subject to some fluctuation, this rate of advance take-up has been broadly consistent over the last 12 months.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[78686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of amending the universal credit application form and online journal to enable her Department to automatically (a) assess and (b) register children for free school meals.

Will Quince:

The eligibility criteria for free school meals are the responsibility of the Department for Education in England, and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Department for Education already provides an electronic eligibility checking service to all local authorities in England, which is used to confirm eligibility for free school meals.

Universal Credit (UC) claimants may currently be entitled to a number of other benefits because they are in receipt of UC. These are known as passported benefits and include free school meals and free prescriptions. The eligibility criteria for each passported benefit remain the responsibility of relevant departments and the devolved administrations that own them.

The Department needs to ensure that there is a high level of security to protect claimants' personal information, and has no plans to amend either the UC claim form or online journal to obtain an applicant's consent to register eligible children for free school meals.

Neil Coyle:

[\[78690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what lessons her Department will be taking forward from the Harrogate managed migration pilot; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, and the resulting increase in Universal Credit (UC) new claims since the middle of March 2020, the decision was taken to suspend the Move to UC pilot in the area served by Harrogate Jobcentre. As a result, it is premature to develop any definitive conclusions surrounding the pilot or to make public statements. The Department will share findings with stakeholders and Parliament when they become available.

■ Universal Credit: Wirral West

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[78706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people affected by the decision of the Court of Appeal of 22 June 2020 in the case Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart v. the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in Wirral West constituency.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[78862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans implement a policy change in response to the decision of the Court of Appeal of 22 June 2020 in the case Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart vs the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

I refer the Hon Members to the answer I gave on 1 July 2020 to Question UIN 63208:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-23/63208/>

■ **Vacancies: West Midlands**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[78808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of job vacancies in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands in each month since January 2020 to date.

Mims Davies:

Official statistics on vacancies are not available for each region and nation of the UK. However, [experimental statistics on online job adverts](#) are available at a regional level. These statistics are provided by ONS in partnership with Adzuna (an online job search engine).

■ **Work Capability Assessment**

Stephen Timms:

[77501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to develop (a) paper and (b) telephone versions of work capability assessments; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

Paper based reviews have always been a feature of Work Capability Assessments. Wherever possible, if there is sufficient evidence available, our Assessment Provider will make a recommendation based on a paper-based review. If this is not possible, our provider will currently look to offer a telephone assessment, where appropriate.

We remain fully committed to making continuous improvements to the support we provide to people with health conditions and disabilities, and are evaluating the changes temporarily introduced to inform the approach taken to conducting assessments in the future.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TRANSPORT

■ Consultation on draft Spaceflight Regulations

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Rachel Maclean):

[\[HCWS426\]](#)

My Noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Baroness Vere of Norbiton) made the following Ministerial Statement on 29 July 2020.

I am today publishing the consultation on draft regulations and guidance made under the 2018 Space Industry Act. This consultation seeks views on the operability and effectiveness of the draft Space Industry Regulations, Accident Investigation Regulations, Appeals Regulations, and the associated guidance documents and Regulator's Licensing Rules. As part of this consultation, a consultation stage Impact Assessment has also been published.

The UK's space sector is already a unique national asset – which this Government is committed to turbo-charging. The UK's space sector can strengthen our national capabilities, create high-skilled jobs and level up the UK. To support this, the Queen's Speech on 19 December set out the Government's intent to establish a new National Space Council and develop a comprehensive UK Space Strategy. The launch of this consultation and the introduction of a new regulatory framework form an integral part of the work we are doing to bring commercial spaceflight to the UK and create a supportive regulatory environment which fosters growth in the sector.

Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global market to 10 per cent by 2030. In order to support this, our spaceflight programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch, sub-orbital spaceflight and space tourism from UK spaceports. To help expand the UK's spaceflight capabilities, government is funding a range of industry-led projects. Separately, we are also investing in related facilities and technology. This will provide industry with new commercial market opportunities, grow our export share and help to build new UK supply chains.

As acknowledged in the Government's Research & Development Roadmap, regulation that enables the development, demonstration and deployment of new technologies is essential to championing companies on the technological frontier. Our regulatory framework for spaceflight will support safe and sustainable activities that will drive research, innovation and entrepreneurship in this vital sector, exploiting the unique environment of space, and providing a catalyst for growth across the space sector. This will feed into our emerging National Space Strategy as we develop further priorities for the UK and the sector in the long term and contribute this Government's agenda to level up the whole country.

Enabling UK based space launches

Currently the space activities of UK entities are governed by the Outer Space Act 1986. This requires any UK entities who procure the launch of a satellite and/or operate a

satellite in orbit to hold a licence. The UK has a well-established and globally respected licensing regime for these activities. However, UK satellite operators currently have to rely on obtaining slots on launches from other countries to get their satellites in orbit. Our aim now is to license launches from UK spaceports. I expect to see the first UK based launches during the early 2020s.

Whilst the Space Industry Act 2018 is now law, the draft secondary legislation contained in this consultation is required to create the regulatory framework necessary for commercial launch operations to be licensed in the UK. Once regulations are in force, the Space Industry Act 2018 will work alongside the Outer Space Act 1986 to regulate the spaceflight and associated activities of UK entities.

Together with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority we have legislated to allow for the regulation of a wide range of new commercial spaceflight technologies, including traditional vertically launched vehicles, air-launched vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes and balloons. We have endeavoured to produce legislation that is flexible enough to accommodate emerging technological advancements, market opportunities and changes to the international legal landscape, while keeping safety at the forefront.

To ensure that these services are carried out safely and responsibly, we are creating a new regulator for commercial spaceflight and associated activities. It is our intention that the Civil Aviation Authority will undertake all Space Industry Act 2018 regulatory functions in addition to regulating in-orbit activities under the Outer Space Act 1986.

Next steps

The deadline for responses to consultation is Wednesday 21st October 2020.

Following which I will update the House and publish the Government's response to consultation.