



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 3 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:36 P.M., 03 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Beer: Small Businesses

Thangam Debonnaire: [82064]

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

Paul Scully:

We fully recognise the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on small businesses, including breweries. That is why we introduced an economic package to help small businesses, such as grants, loans and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The Government is continuing to work with the hospitality sector during the pandemic, including regular engagement with representatives from the industry.

■ Businesses: Coronavirus

Vicky Foxcroft: [78740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what guidance and support he has provided to businesses to ensure that (a) they are covid-safe and (b) staff who are shielding can return to work safely on 1 August 2020.

Paul Scully:

We have set out COVID-secure guidance to help businesses take the measures that are right for them. The weblink for the new guidance is www.gov.uk/workingsafely. The Government has also developed a tool to help businesses in England to reopen safely during coronavirus. The tool encourages businesses to carry out a risk assessment and helps to identify the workplace adjustments that they should make. Employees can also the tool use it to check what their workplace needs to do to keep people safe: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-reopening>.

The latest Department for Health and Social Care guidance should be followed, which is being incorporated effectively into the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's working safely COVID-secure guidance for 1 August 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>.

■ Carbon Emissions

Margaret Greenwood: [82007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with local authority leaders on achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The UK was the first major economy to legislate for a net zero target, in line with advice from our independent expert advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, that 2050 was the earliest feasible date for achieving this.

BEIS launched the Local Energy programme in 2017 to support local authorities in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean growth. Almost £20 million has been invested in the programme to date, funding a range of measures designed to build local capacity and capability. This includes creating five Local Energy Hubs across England, which provide Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities with access to expertise to help them develop plans to secure investment in low carbon projects. The programme has also funded the production of an energy strategy for every LEP area, the production of good practice guidance and resources, a finance conference and regional workshops, and the £10 million re-launch of the Rural Community Energy Fund.

Carbon Emissions: Schools**Helen Hayes:**[\[82192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of retrofitting schools to become zero carbon schools on (a) carbon emissions and (b) behaviour change.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Public Sector Energy Efficiency Loan scheme provides interest-free loans which enable schools, and other public sector organisations, to make improvements to their buildings to reduce carbon emissions. The public sector, including schools, can play an important role in driving wider behaviour change by demonstrating leadership in reducing their emissions.

Carers: Discrimination**Ellie Reeves:**[\[78818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to monitor compliance with his 11 May 2020 guidance to employers on not acting in ways that may discriminate against people with caring responsibilities.

Ellie Reeves:[\[78819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to enforce compliance with his 11 May 2020 guidance to employers on not discriminating against people with caring responsibilities.

Paul Scully:

The guidance is non-statutory but does not change existing obligations relating to health and safety, employment, or equalities. 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. Some workers, whether through specific vulnerability,

family caring responsibilities or an abundance of caution may be reluctant to re-enter a workplace even though the employer feels it is safe to do so. The Government would encourage employers to engage constructively with such workers and their representatives and try to find solutions that are agreeable to all.

If anyone has concerns that employers are not taking all reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risks of COVID-19, they should get in touch with their employee representative or union, or with the Health and Safety Executive. Health and safety legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive, the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and by local authorities. We have been clear that there will be Health and Safety Executive spot checks on businesses to ensure they keep their employees safe. If the enforcing authority finds that an employer is not taking action to properly manage workplace risk, a range of actions are open to them including specific advice or issuing enforcement notices.

■ Climate Change

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[82005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the ability of local authorities to help tackle the climate emergency at a local level.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS launched the Local Energy programme in 2017 to support local authorities in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean growth. Almost £20 million has been invested in the programme to date, funding a range of measures designed to build local capacity and capability. This includes creating five Local Energy Hubs across England, which provide Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities with access to expertise to help them develop plans to secure investment in low carbon projects. The programme has also funded the production of an energy strategy for every LEP area, the production of good practice guidance and resources, a finance conference and regional workshops, and the £10 million re-launch of the Rural Community Energy Fund.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[82006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what resources his Department is providing to local authorities to help them respond to the climate emergency.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS launched the Local Energy programme in 2017 to support local authorities in taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean growth. Almost £20 million has been invested in the programme to date, funding a range of measures designed to build local capacity and capability. This includes creating five Local Energy Hubs across England, which provide Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local authorities with access to expertise to help them develop plans to secure investment in low carbon projects. The programme has also funded the

production of an energy strategy for every LEP area, the production of good practice guidance and resources, a finance conference and regional workshops, and the £10 million re-launch of the Rural Community Energy Fund.

■ Copyright

Tracy Brabin: [\[82245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for the inclusion of a national copyright exhaustion regime in free trade agreements of the effect of that framework on (a) the publishing sector and (b) other creative industries.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government considers the issue of exhaustion of rights to be primarily a domestic issue. As free trade agreements do not typically restrict the freedom of countries to choose their own exhaustion regime, we will make full use of our autonomy to choose a permanent exhaustion regime now we have left the European Union.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff

Jon Trickett: [\[77516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when a covid-19 risk assessment was undertaken for his Department's office in Victoria Street; who carried out those risk assessments; what proportion of staff will be able to return to work in that office; what reduction in workplace capacity that risk assessment identified; how decisions on which staff will be required to return to his Department's offices are made; and if he will place a copy of the risk assessment in the Library.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The COVID-19 Risk Assessment for 1 Victoria Street was undertaken on 12 May 2020. The risk assessment was subsequently reviewed and updated on 2, 3, 4 and 11 June 2020. Prior to this, individual risk assessments were carried out for departmental staff needing to work in the building since the advent of COVID-19.

The risk assessment was undertaken by the Department's Health, Safety & Wellbeing team in consultation with the Departmental Trade Union Side, with engagement from the Government Property Agency and ISS (our facilities contractor).

Based on current social distancing measures and maintaining a COVID-19 Secure building, 84% reduction in workplace capacity was identified resulting in 13% of the Department's staff being able to work in the 1 Victoria Street office at any one time, when compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.

In line with the "Working Safely during Coronavirus guidance on office working", the majority of staff are working from home. When deciding on whether staff can return to the workplace, the Department considers whether staff perform a critical role which cannot be performed remotely, or if there are personal circumstances which mean an

individual is unable to work from home. This may include a lack of a safe, suitable working environment or a wellbeing concern.

The risk assessment results for 1 Victoria Street follow the Results summary of COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Civil Service Departments, which was published on GOV.UK by the Cabinet Office on 3 August 2020. A copy of the Results summary of COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Civil Service Departments has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Training

Neil O'Brien:

[\[77796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many staff in his Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department encourages all staff to undertake Unconscious Bias training through Civil Service Learning.

The data in the table below shows the number of individuals completing training by financial year since 1st April 2018.

	FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING	ONLINE TRAINING
2018/19	221	1,080
2019/20	167	1,038

■ Entertainments and Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Ben Lake:

[\[82284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on businesses in the hospitality and entertainment sectors of energy companies classifying those companies as high risk as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he is taking to ensure the equitable treatment of those sectors by energy companies.

Paul Scully:

The hospitality sector is a vital part of our economy, and the Government has introduced a wide range of economic measures to support businesses of all sizes through this difficult period.

Contractual terms offered to businesses are a commercial matter for energy suppliers. An offer of a supply contract will depend upon the type of business, estimated and volatility consumption, the customer's credit score and length of contract required. We would encourage businesses to look at terms from multiple suppliers to find the best deal.

■ Foreign Companies: Coronavirus

Stella Creasy:

[\[81865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what monitoring the Government undertakes to assess whether funding from the (a) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (b) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been provided to firms based outside of the UK.

Paul Scully:

In order to be eligible for finance under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) must have the core of its business operations based in the UK. An SME which is foreign-owned is in principle eligible to apply for CBILS, provided it is trading in the UK (not just selling into the UK) and uses the CBILS facility to support its business activity in the UK. The same is true for an SME which has UK ownership but is registered abroad.

For firms to be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), they must have a UK bank account and UK payroll. However, HMRC will continue to monitor claim data, compare against records and review reports of any fraudulent or misleading claims. HMRC will not hesitate to take action against those found to be abusing or misleading the scheme.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Park Homes

James Wild:

[\[82499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the new Green Homes Grant scheme will be available to the owners and tenants of (a) park homes and (b) other mobile homes.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Park homeowners (for residential sites including Gypsy and Traveller sites) are eligible for the Green Homes Grant scheme. Further details regarding eligibility, terms & conditions et cetera will be published in due course.

■ Hydrogen

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[78803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had on (a) the creation of a Hydrogen Advisory Council and (b) a UK-wide hydrogen strategy.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Government and industry have worked together to launch a new Hydrogen Advisory Council, which met for the first time on 20th July 2020. The Council will enable Government to work in partnership with industry to ensure the UK is at the forefront of low carbon hydrogen production and supply. The Council will oversee a range of workstreams to support the development of a robust UK hydrogen economy.

We are currently developing our strategic approach to hydrogen and its potential to deliver against our net zero goals. This includes extensive stakeholder engagement to inform our approach, including through the Hydrogen Advisory Council.

■ Innovate UK: Females

Jess Phillips:

[\[81962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of Innovate UK funding has been allocated to businesses led by women in financial year (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21 to date.

Amanda Solloway:

Innovate UK does not currently hold data in this form. Innovate UK are committed to encouraging diversity and inclusion in business innovation, they wish to find the best and most talented innovators from a diverse range of backgrounds, and provide them with the resources, advice and self-belief to succeed.

Programmes have been implemented to tackle the low number of female applicants, for example the Women in Innovation programme, launched in 2016, and the Young Innovators programme, launched in 2017.

Since 2017, Innovate UK have shared an EDI survey with people registering for support to gather EDI data, however, low completion rates (16%) resulting from this approach has required a change. From June 2020, all applicants for Innovate UK competitions are required to complete a new EDI survey. The survey asks questions on gender, age, ethnicity and disability status. This data will then be aggregated, anonymised and analysed to inform future actions to address under-representation across competitions.

Historic data analysis indicates that between 2013 and 2016, 14.3% of applications submitted were led by a woman. Analysis since 2016 indicates that this percentage has increased to around 24% (70% increase) and can be attributed to the focus on Women in Innovation, including the Innovate UK 2019 Women in Innovation Awards. A new competition for Women in Innovation Awards opened on 1 September 2020.

Most recently, Innovate UK's "Business-led innovation in response to global disruption" competition (Open April 2020), 21.7% of applications were woman-led. This is in line with the levels we have seen since the growth of woman-led applications following the Women in Innovation focus.

On International Women's Day, the Government committed almost £3 million and a package of business support to help inventions by women and young people like clean energy solutions and healthcare services. Over 100 entrepreneurial women and young people are set to benefit from government-backed funds to turn inspiring ideas into thriving businesses.

■ Marriage: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis: [\[81903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a timescale for the resumption of wedding ceremonies with over 30 attendees as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Paul Scully:

We are continuing to engage with representatives from the industry to explore how larger weddings and celebrations may be resumed in a COVID-19 secure way, once it is safe to do so. The limit of 30 people who can attend a wedding ceremony is consistent with broader policy on public gatherings – it is unlawful for private parties of over 30 to take place and we are advising that gatherings and events in COVID-19 secure venues should not exceed 30 people.

■ Night-time Economy

Dan Jarvis: [\[81904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to provide sector-specific support for the financial recovery of night clubs and the UK night time entertainment services sector after the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

We appreciate that the outbreak presents a significant challenge to the owners of nightclubs, which are still required to remain closed. The Government put in place an unprecedented programme of support to help businesses across the economy through the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, loan guarantees, grants, VAT deferral and the forfeiture moratorium. We are engaging regularly with the nightclub sector to understand their immediate and longer-term needs.

■ Nuclear Power Stations: Construction

Alan Brown: [\[82101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will list the proposed new build nuclear sites where China General Nuclear Power Company have a potential investment stake.

Nadhim Zahawi:

China General Nuclear Power Corporation is, through subsidiary companies, investing in the construction of Hinkley Point C as well as the development of Sizewell C and Bradwell B.

■ Post Offices: Closures**Marion Fellows:** [\[77688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Post Offices were temporarily closed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) each region of England on (i) 31 May 2020, (ii) 30 June 2020 and (iii) 21 July 2020.

Paul Scully:

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. As such, temporarily closed Post Offices across the UK on 31 May, 30 June and 21 July are operational matters for Post Office Limited.

Marion Fellows: [\[77689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of each Post Office branch type were temporarily closed in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales, (c) Northern Ireland and (d) each region of England on (i) 31 May 2020, (ii) 30 June 2020, and (iii) 21 July 2020.

Paul Scully:

While the Government sets the strategic direction for the Post Office, it allows the company the commercial freedom to deliver this strategy as an independent business. As such, the number of Post Office branch type temporarily closed across the UK since 31 May, 30 June and 21 July are operational matters for Post Office Limited.

■ Post Offices: ICT**Chi Onwurah:** [\[77611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Chair of the independent Horizon enquiry will have the power to review the awards of compensation made to date.

Paul Scully:

The comprehensive settlement to the group litigation was agreed by both parties following a number of days of confidential mediation, of which Government was not a party. Following the settlement, the Post Office has also announced a scheme which aims to address historic shortfalls for postmasters who were not part of the Group Litigation.

The Government is committed to establishing an independent review to consider whether the Post Office has learned the necessary lessons from the Horizon dispute and court case.

■ Post Offices: Rural Areas

Gill Furniss:

[\[77737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to maintain the public subsidy allocated to Post Offices in rural locations after March 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Government has invested over £2 billion in the Post Office network since 2010.

Our current funding agreement with Post Office runs up to 2021 and we are working with Post Office to ensure the network is sustainable beyond that point. Beyond 2021, Government remains committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the network and will work with Post Office Limited to achieve this.

■ Postal Services: Rural Areas

Carla Lockhart:

[\[77856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that postal services are maintained in rural areas after the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Universal Service Obligation is set out in the Postal Services Act 2011 and ensures a six-day a week, one price goes anywhere, service for the delivery and collection of letters (and five days a week for parcels) throughout the United Kingdom. Ofcom, as the UK's designated independent regulator of postal services, monitors the delivery of the universal postal service standards.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, postal operators have continued to provide a valuable service to this country, including in rural communities.

The Government's objective in relation to postal services continues to be to secure a sustainable service for users throughout the UK, including those in remote and rural areas.

■ Redundancy

Jessica Morden:

[\[81696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that companies comply with ACAS guidelines on accrued holiday pay when making an employee redundant.

Paul Scully:

Where a worker is made redundant by their employer, they are entitled to be paid for any accrued but untaken holiday and any holiday taken but unpaid up to the point of their redundancy. Further guidance on how to calculate holiday pay and entitlement is available on GOV.UK and is kept under review.

On the 23rd July, the Department published updated guidance to clarify holiday pay for workers who are made redundant. This also includes when an employee is made redundant by an insolvent employer. The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/calculating-holiday-pay-for-workers-without-fixed-hours-or-pay>

Employees who feel their rights have been denied may contact ACAS to receive free and impartial advice and may be able to bring a claim to an employment tribunal.

■ Trade Credit Reinsurance Scheme

Chris Elmore:

[77740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the Trade Credit Reinsurance Scheme to start accepting applications from Scottish food and drink wholesale businesses.

Paul Scully:

The Government's Trade Credit Reinsurance Scheme will see the majority of Trade Credit Insurance coverage maintained for businesses across the UK. The Scheme operates as a reinsurance arrangement through trade credit insurers which will enable them to continue to write and maintain cover to business throughout the COVID-19 crisis. At present, insurers serving over 80% of the market have signed up to participate in the scheme. There is no need for underlying businesses to sign up to the scheme.

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Barry Gardiner:

[905342]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the administrative costs for British businesses who are seeking to trade goods into Northern Ireland after the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

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

■ Borders: Newhaven

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[82275]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what new border infrastructure is being planned for Newhaven.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer [given by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 13 July 2020](#) to Hywel Williams MP.

■ Broadcasting: EU Law**Catherine West:** [\[82222\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the (a) European Audiovisual Media Services Directive and (b) Directives relating to Copyright will be transferred to UK law after the transition period.

Penny Mordaunt:

The government outlined its approach to Audiovisual Media Services Directive in its public consultation launched in May 2019, and confirmed plans for implementation in its response in February 2020.

■ Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission**Wendy Chamberlain:** [\[82427\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the timetable is for the establishment of the proposed Commission on the Constitution, Democracy and Human Rights.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Hon. member to the answer given to PQs [1274-1279](#) on 13 January 2020.

DEFENCE**■ Armed Forces: Education****Dan Jarvis:** [\[81906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to extend the expiration date for claims made to the Enhanced Learning Credits scheme after the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heapey:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has put arrangements in place to mitigate for those Service leavers and veterans who made claims via the Enhanced Learning Credits (ELC) scheme in Financial Year (FY) 2019-20 and were subsequently adversely affected due to COVID-19 restrictions. Individuals affected will either be entitled to an ELC claim amendment for a rescheduled course in FY 2020-21 or, exceptionally, depending on individual circumstances, a scheme membership expiry date extension. We have already considered and approved a number of such requests on a case-by-case basis and will continue to do so.

■ Belarus: Armed Forces**Owen Thompson:** [\[82147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make it his policy to cease all military training by the UK to the Belarusian military.

James Heappey:

The UK and Belarus have shared a cooperative defence relationship which aims to promote mutual learning and understanding through events such as winter survival training, language training and peacekeeping training.

However, in light of recent events we have decided to suspend our defence engagement programme with Belarus and will keep this under close review.

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Deployment

Kirsty Blackman: [\[81950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the direct costs of the first deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

James Heappey:

HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH's Carrier Strike Group 2021 deployment will involve multiple ships and capabilities from across Defence. The construct of this deployment is still in the planning phase and as such costs have not been finalised.

Kirsty Blackman: [\[81954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on UK-China relations of the deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth on freedom of navigation operations in the Pacific in the vicinity of disputed islands.

James Heappey:

Planning for the inaugural deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth in 2021 as part of a Carrier Strike Group continues. It will be an ambitious deployment which demonstrates the UK's commitment to upholding a rules based international system and showcases our world-leading carrier capability. Once plans for the deployment have been agreed, the Government will make a statement to the House.

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

Dave Doogan: [\[82383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many civilian employees with a permanent duty station recorded in Scotland were employed by his Department as at 31 December 1989.

James Heappey:

The data for civilian employees with a permanent duty station within Scotland as at 31 December 1989 is not held.

■ Veterans: Proof of Identity

Andrew Rosindell: [\[81611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to accelerate the roll-out of the second phase of the Veterans' recognition scheme.

Andrew Gwynne:

[81645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress the Government has made on implementing Phase 2 of the roll-out of veterans ID cards.

James Heapey:

The Veterans' ID card provides both a memento of service and allows statutory and charity service providers to more easily identify an individual as someone who has served. Phase one of the Veterans' ID card is complete, with Service leavers now receiving a card as part of the discharge process. Phase two will enable existing veterans to more quickly, easily, and securely prove they served in the UK Armed Forces so they can access the services they need, through digital means. Future-proofing and safeguarding against fraudulent use means the process for phase two rollout will take longer than anticipated. This Government is committed to making the UK the best place to be a veteran in the world, and we need to ensure that this is not abused.

The Ministry of Defence, including Veterans UK, is working with the Office for Veterans' Affairs within the Cabinet Office to develop ideas on how to build an online digital verification tool so that people can prove they served; this is a commitment in the *Strategy for Our Veterans*. We are beginning to move this work forward but are unable to announce a delivery date at this point.

Information on phase two of the Veterans' ID card will be released closer to the launch date at the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-veterans-id-cards-rolled-out-to-service-leavers>

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Children's Centres: Coronavirus

Daniel Zeichner:

[77661]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether covid-19 social distancing guidelines for the indoor play sector need to be signed off by the (a) Health and Safety Executive and (b) Public Health England before the indoor play sector can reopen.

Nigel Huddleston:

Yes, guidance for the indoor play sector needs to be signed off by Public Health England and Health and Safety Executive. We will be working closely with both organisations to develop guidance for this sector.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Gill Furniss:

[82237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish an updated timetable for the phased return of business events, music concerts,

crowds in sporting events and other cultural events as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

On 17 July, the Prime Minister announced that as long as the prevalence of COVID-19 remains around or below current levels into the Autumn, we will reduce easements on a number of sectors including those listed from 1 October. We have always been clear that easing lockdown restrictions depended on the prevalence of COVID-19. As with all aspects of the Government's response to Covid-19, our decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and public health assessments.

From 15 August, audiences adhering to social distancing were able to return to live indoor theatres, music and performance venues. This is the fourth stage of the performing arts roadmap and we continue to work with the sector on how we can achieve the final stage of the roadmap, indoor performances with fuller audiences. Exhibition and conference centers were allowed to show small groups of up to 30 people with social distancing requirements to view the facilities and plan future events and to enable government-backed pilots to take place.

The Government also announced that a small number of sporting events and business events will be used to pilot the safe return of spectators and attendees through September— with the ambition to reopen competition venues for sports fans and venues for business events, with social distancing measures in place, from 1 October, subject to the covid situation.

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

■ **Dormant Assets Distribution Fund**

Judith Cummins:

[\[77673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the value of the dormant assets that are planned to be transferred to the Dormant Assets Distribution Fund from dormant bank accounts in (a) financial year 2020-21 and (b) the next four financial years.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The dormant assets scheme is managed by Reclaim Fund Ltd (RFL), who estimate that £68m of new assets will be received by them in 2020, followed by £83m in 2021 and £54m in 2022. Estimates are not made beyond this point, but RFL anticipates that ongoing levels will remain broadly similar in 2023. It should be noted that the dormant asset scheme is voluntary and so estimates can vary over time.

Judith Cummins:[\[77674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the current value is of un-allocated funds in the Dormant Assets Distribution Fund.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Reclaim Fund Ltd annually receives dormant assets and reserves the amount required to meet customer reclaims. The remainder is allocated to The National Lottery Community Fund for distribution. In an unprecedented move to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, all money available for distribution this financial year was allocated in May 2020 as part of the government's announcement of £150m of dormant assets funding. This money is supporting charities, social enterprises, and vulnerable communities to respond to and recover from the pandemic. There are therefore no unallocated funds available for England at this time.

■ Exercise: Coronavirus**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[78782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to enable outdoor fitness classes of more than six people as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health. The government's guidance remains that people should gather in groups of no larger than six people from different households, or two households, adhering to social distancing. Further easing of restrictions will take place as and when appropriate in line with scientific and medical advice.

■ Holiday Play Schemes: Finance**Apsana Begum:**[\[78876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking with local councils to increase support for activities for young people over the 2020 summer holiday.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government recognises the important role out-of-school settings play in providing young people with enriching opportunities to support their wellbeing. DCMS and the Department for Education have supported local councils and the youth sector by publishing guidance on gov.uk about how to safely run activities for young people over the summer 2020 holidays.

The Government's £9m Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme has directly supported up to 50,000 disadvantaged children across 17 local authority areas to stay healthy and active over the summer.

In collaboration with the Department for Education, National Citizen Service is providing a further education support offer for 16-17 year olds over the summer. This is free to further education (FE) providers and will include sessions on ; employability, health and wellbeing, careers guidance, citizenship and skills for independent living.

■ Ice Skating: Coronavirus

Nick Fletcher:

[\[82585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to reopen ice skating rings as covid-19 restrictions are eased to allow British athletes to train for international competitions.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health. Ice-skating rinks were able to reopen from 15 August. These facilities are able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance. Elite athletes have been able to access specialist sports facilities for training purposes since mid April.

■ Loneliness: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[81964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has assessed the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of loneliness and social isolation.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has been closely monitoring loneliness and social isolation during the Covid-19 outbreak, working with a range of sectors to hear their experiences and learn from their evidence through the government's new Tackling Loneliness Network.

The impacts of Covid-19 on loneliness are still to be fully seen and the evidence base is still developing. Emerging indications suggest that prevalence of chronic loneliness across the UK population as a whole appears to have remained stable throughout the lockdown period and may have decreased since social distancing measures eased in early June. However, initial analysis of the UCL Covid-19 Social Study has shown that some vulnerable groups (e.g. young people, adults living alone) appeared to be at a heightened risk of chronic loneliness during lockdown.

The Government will continue to monitor the effects of Covid-19 on loneliness and social isolation.

Colleen Fletcher:[\[81965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle loneliness and social isolation resulting from the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government launched a major effort to tackle loneliness and social isolation in April 2020. The plan aimed to ensure that staying at home does not need to lead to loneliness.

As part of the plan, the latest #Let'sTalkLoneliness public campaign was rolled out to get people talking openly about loneliness, including new public guidance offering useful tips and advice on how people can look after themselves and others safely.

In addition, Government launched a £5 million fund to support national loneliness organisations supporting those at risk of loneliness. We also announced a £4m microgrants fund which will support small, grassroots organisations addressing loneliness, due to open in the early new year.

The Office for Civil Society has also established the Tackling Loneliness Network, a group of over 60 high-profile charities, businesses and public sector organisations, which is now working to find and implement innovative solutions to loneliness, drawing on their diverse expertise.

■ Martial Arts: Coronavirus**Nick Fletcher:**[\[78904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that martial arts clubs are able to reopen as lockdown restrictions are eased during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health. Martial arts are able to resume on a non-contact basis so long as they are done in alignment with Government guidance on group sizes, social distancing and venues. The Government is in discussions with representatives from martial arts governing bodies about the steps required to restart contact safely.

■ Newspaper Press and Radio: Taxation**John Nicolson:**[\[77680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the Advertising Association's proposals for an advertising tax credit for local radio stations and news publications.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Advertising is a central driver of the UK economy and government is committed to supporting the continued growth of the industry across the whole of the UK. Government is evaluating a range of measures to meet this goal, including an advertising tax credit.

■ Sports Competitors: Abuse**Sir Edward Davey:**[\[78488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) UK Sport and (b) British Gymnastics on recent allegations of physical and mental abuse of gymnasts; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

I wrote to British Gymnastics on 9th July, expressing my concerns at the emerging allegations of abuse.

It is vital that everyone participating in sport feels safe and secure and that where allegations of inappropriate or harmful behaviour are made, these are taken seriously. There is no place for abuse of any kind in sport and anyone responsible for such behaviour must be held accountable.

I therefore welcome the launch, on 25th August, of the Whyte Review which will look into allegations of mistreatment within the sport of gymnastics.

My department will follow the Whyte Review and its findings closely and will continue to work with Sport England, UK Sport and the Child Protection in Sport Unit to strengthen safeguarding provision.

■ Sports: Equality**Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[78825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with sporting bodies on their monitoring of equality and diversity.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to working with the whole of sport to ensure it is diverse and inclusive, and discusses equality as part of regular engagement with the sector

As announced in July 2020, UK Sport and Sport England are carrying out a review of the Code for Sports Governance to look at areas where it would benefit from further development, including around equality, diversity and inclusion.

■ Trade Agreements: USA**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[905383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect on data adequacy negotiations with other trade partners of the agreement with the US on access to electronic data.

Mr John Whittingdale:

It is our intention to secure positive adequacy decisions from the EU to allow personal data to continue to flow freely from the EU/EEA to the UK. We are seeking positive adequacy decisions under both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED), before the end of the transition period.

We see the EU's assessment process on data adequacy as technical and confirmatory of the reality that the UK is operating the same regulatory frameworks as the EU, and the UK considers it self-evidently in the interest of both sides to have adequacy decisions in place by the end of the year. No other third country's standards have ever been closer to the EU's.

The UK-US Data Access Agreement is a vital tool to facilitate law enforcement in the prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of serious crime. This world-leading agreement will deliver on the people's priorities by dramatically speeding up investigations and prosecutions of terrorists, child abusers and other serious criminals and ensuring children are protected faster. The Agreement includes significant data protection and privacy safeguards and is compatible with UK and EU data protection legislation and, therefore, is consistent with the UK seeking a positive adequacy decision from the EU.

EDUCATION**■ Financial Services: Primary Education**

Rob Roberts: [\[77831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions on the provision of financial education for primary school aged children.

Rob Roberts: [\[77832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase the teaching of financial capability to children and young people as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Rob Roberts: [\[77833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether catch-up educational services for primary school pupils will include financial education in the next academic year.

Nick Gibb:

Financial education is taught as part of the national curriculum subjects of mathematics and citizenship. Due to the unprecedented challenges for schools caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government ensured that during the national lockdown restrictions, schools were given flexibility around the education they are providing to their pupils. The Department expected schools and teachers to use their professional judgement and knowledge of their pupils' educational needs to plan appropriate content that enables education to continue.

Schools should resume teaching an ambitious and broad curriculum, in all subjects, from the start of the autumn term. This means that all pupils will be taught a wide range of subjects so they can maintain their choices for further study and employment. Our latest guidance on teaching to support children is set out here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

Our £1 billion COVID-19 “catch-up” package, including £650 million shared across schools over the 2020/21 academic year, will support schools to put the right catch-up support in place: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time>.

The Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools to direct this funding, which is accessible here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/>.

For the longer term, the Department will continue to work closely with The Money and Pension Service and HM Treasury to consider how to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

■ GCE A-level: Assessments

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[81478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will implement an appeals system to enable A-level students whose grades were adversely affected by schools' and colleges' interpretation of Ofqual guidance to have their centre-assessed grades reviewed by examination boards: and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

This year, appeals against A and AS Level and GCSE grades can be submitted by schools or colleges where they think the exam board did not apply its procedures properly and fairly or where the data used by the exam board to calculate results contained an error.

Guidance to schools and colleges from the independent qualifications regulator in England, Ofqual, provided advice on objectivity in deciding on their centre assessment grades. All centre assessment grades were signed off by head teachers and or college principals who confirmed that they honestly and fairly represented the grades that these students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams as planned.

Any students who have evidence of bias or discrimination will be able to go through the normal complaints procedure at their school or college or complain to the exam board, which could investigate potential malpractice.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Margaret Greenwood: [\[82009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the financial costs are, aside from pensions and National Insurance contributions for employees, for schools seeking to take part in the National Tutoring Programme.

Margaret Greenwood: [\[82010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the ability of schools with an above national average proportion of disadvantaged pupils to pay for the costs of the National Tutoring Programme.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) will provide targeted support for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people who need the most help as a result of the disruption to their education caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The programme consists of two main parts and is heavily subsidised by the Government. One part is the provision of Academic Mentors. Our most disadvantaged schools will be able to access a full-time Academic Mentor to join their staff to support tutoring. The Government will pay the salary costs in full, with schools only required to pay on-costs, for example, pension contributions.

A second part is support through Tutoring Partners. Schools will be able to access tutoring support from approved organisations to provide small group or individual tutoring. This is subsidised at 75%, meaning schools need only provide 25% of costs which can be met through additional catch-up premium funding provided by the Government.

We are providing a £650 million universal catch-up premium for all schools. This funding can be spent by schools in any way that best meets the needs of their pupils, including to support any additional costs that may occur from participating in the NTP.

In addition, schools will continue to receive their Pupil Premium funding, meaning that schools with a larger proportion of Pupil Premium pupils will receive larger amounts of funding which can also be used to provide tutoring and other support for those that need it the most.

■ Pupils: Digital Technology

Jim McMahon: [\[82231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of the 200,000 devices and 4G wireless routers distributed from May to July 2020 to disadvantaged school children were (a) allocated and (b) distributed to children in each local authority in Greater Manchester.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers to local authorities and academy trusts for children who would not

otherwise have access, as part of over £100 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care.

The devices were an injection of support to help local authorities and academy trusts to provide access to education and social care during the COVID-19 outbreak. Local authorities and academy trusts are responsible for distributing the devices and are best placed to know which children and young people need access to a device.

On 27 August, the Department published information on which local authorities and academy trusts had received devices through the programme, including each local authority in Greater Manchester. This information can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laptops-tablets-and-4g-wireless-routers-progress-data>.

The Department is now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 additional devices available this academic year in the event face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions and children become reliant on remote education.

This scheme will enable schools to support disadvantaged children in years 3 to 11 who do not have access to a device. Devices will also be able to be ordered for disadvantaged children across all year groups who are shielding as a result of official advice, all year groups who attend hospital schools and those completing their Key Stage 4 at a further education college.

■ Schools: Carbon Emissions

Helen Hayes:

[82193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of retrofitting schools to become zero carbon schools on school budgets.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has allocated £9.5 billion since 2015 to improve the condition of the school estate, including improving energy efficiency. This includes an additional £560 million in capital funding this year, announced by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, in June.

Interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects in maintained schools have also been made available through the Government-backed Salix finance scheme and to academies through an annual application process.

On 29 June, the Government also announced a 10-year school rebuilding programme. This will replace school buildings that are ageing or in poor condition with modern, energy-efficient designs that will help to meet the Government's net zero target.

More broadly, the Department is working with colleagues across the Government on carbon reduction and energy efficiency and on developing thinking on how future capital programmes can contribute further.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has already announced £1 billion to support making public buildings greener, including schools and hospitals, which will help the country meet its ambitions of achieving net zero by 2050.

Further details on future capital funding will be set out at the Spending Review.

■ Schools: Norfolk

James Wild:

[\[82503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will list the level of funding provided to schools in (a) Norfolk and (b) the North West Norfolk constituency for each year since 2015.

Nick Gibb:

The revenue funding allocated for schools for financial years 2015-16 to 2019-20 for Norfolk local authority are shown in the table below. Schools funding is not allocated by parliamentary constituencies.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NORFOLK LOCAL AUTHORITY (£ MILLIONS)
2015-16	605.6
2016-17	610.9
2017-18	629.8
2018-19	652.2
2019-20	677.8

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Dogs: Imports

Sarah Champion:

[\[81937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of dogs in the last 10 per cent of their pregnancy that have been illegally brought into the UK in 2020.

Elliot Colburn:

[\[82454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of pregnant dogs illegally imported into the UK in 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) only holds records of pregnant dogs where other non-compliances were found at time of interception on entry to Great Britain. APHA does not record details of compliant animals which were pregnant at time of interception.

According to APHA records, eight dogs were seized in 2020 under Council Regulation (EC) no 1/2005, Annex I, FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT, Chapter I, 2(c) 'pregnant females for whom 90% or more of the expected gestation period has already passed'. An additional 11 pregnant bitches not in their last 10% were seized in 2020.

Sarah Champion:

[\[81938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the rate of pregnant dogs illegally brought into the UK and seized by the Animal and Plant Health Agency since 2019.

Victoria Prentis:

According to Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) records, a total of 42 pregnant dogs have been seized since 2019; 23 dogs were seized in 2019 and a further 19 have been seized to date in 2020.

The APHA only holds records of pregnant dogs that were intercepted on entry to Great Britain via Dover Port if there are other non-compliances found at time of interception.

Defra takes the issue of puppy smuggling and other illegal importation of pets seriously. It is an abhorrent trade which causes suffering for the animals affected and puts the health of pets and people in the UK at risk. We have legislation in place to ensure those guilty of offences are duly punished.

■ **Falcons: Exports**

Allan Dorans:

[\[82388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on replacing the paper-based application process for a licence to export live falcons with an online process.

Victoria Prentis:

On 1 June 2020, the Export Health Certificates (EHC) Online service was made available by Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency. This service allows exporters to apply for certain EHCs using a fully online application process.

The EHCs to export captive birds (live falcons) to the United Arab Emirates and Japan were released on the EHC online service on 1 June 2020, replacing the paper-based application process.

A further 13 EHCs for the export of captive birds to various countries will be available for use via the online service by the end of 2020.

■ Flood Control

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[82008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what resources his Department is providing to local authorities to help them (a) manage flood risk and (b) improve their flood mitigation measures.

Rebecca Pow:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government provides funding to local government to carry out functions including managing flood risk and coastal erosion, through the local government finance settlement. The Government is committed to reforming the funding framework for local government funding so that it is simpler, more up to date, and more transparent. This will include a review of local government funding for statutory flood and coastal erosion risk management functions, including the way in which it is allocated, to ensure it is fair and matches the needs and resources of local areas – recognising that some places face different risks.

In March of this year the Government committed to a record £5.2 billion to better protect a further 336,000 properties across all areas of England, and in July 2020, the government published a long-term Policy Statement which sets out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. The Policy Statement outlines five ambitious policies and over 40 supporting actions which will accelerate progress to better protect and better prepare the country against flooding and coastal erosion.

In addition, the Government has committed to invest £200 million to deliver innovative actions which will test new ways to improve resilience to flooding and coastal erosion. 25 areas will benefit from this funding in addition to the four areas we announced in July which will trial and develop ways of planning ahead and making wise investment choices for the decades to come in the face of the long-term uncertainties brought by climate change. The Environment Agency will invite Lead Local Flood Authorities and Coast Protection Authorities to work with local partners on expressions of interest later this year.

The Government is also investing a further £2.9 million which is supporting three regional property flood resilience pathfinder projects to create demonstration centres, engage with businesses, and advice portals, to help people to learn about the benefits of installing resilience measures in their homes.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

[\[81588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 24 April 2020 and follow up correspondence of 29 May 2020, 18 June 2020 and 16 July 2020 regarding constituent Ms Greene.

Victoria Prentis:

I apologise for the delay in responding to my Hon Friend. A reply to my Hon Friend's correspondence will be sent out very shortly.

■ **Rivers: EU Law****James Wild:**[\[82502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to amend the one out all out rule for rivers set out in the Water Framework Directive.

Rebecca Pow:

We have no plans to amend the one out all out rule associated with the classification approach derived from the Water Framework Directive.

■ **Special Areas of Conservation****Olivia Blake:**[\[82612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he will take to integrate areas that are designated as special areas of conservation into the regulatory framework set out in the Environment Bill 2020.

Rebecca Pow:

Special areas of conservation (SACs), along with special protection areas (SPAs), are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These sites are included within the definition of 'national conservation sites' as set out in the Environment Bill. National conservation sites are to be included within 'habitat maps', which will be part of local nature recovery strategies.

More generally, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), established under the Environment Bill, will have a broad environmental remit. It includes environmental law which is defined as including all domestic legislation (other than devolved provisions, or those concerned with a specifically excluded matter), to the extent that they are concerned with one or more of a set of environmental protections.

■ **Water: Standards****Olivia Blake:**[\[82611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, under what circumstances he would use the powers set out in Clause 81 of the Environment Bill to weaken existing targets for the chemical status of water in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Clause 81 is a narrow power which will enable updates to the list of priority substances and their environmental quality standards for surface and ground waters after the end of the transition period. This will ensure that the list of substances used to assess the chemical status of water bodies does not become "frozen" when section 2(2) European Communities Act 1972 powers are no longer available.

Updates to the list of priority substances will be informed by the latest scientific and technical knowledge. Any proposed changes will be subject to statutory consultation requirements which include the Environment Agency and any persons or bodies likely to be affected by the regulations, as well as parliamentary and public scrutiny during the secondary legislation process.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Bahrain: Capital Punishment**

Wayne David: [\[77527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa on 9 July 2020 Official Report, Column 1118, what steps he plans to take in addition to the (a) representations he has made to the Government of Bahrain and (b) tweet he made on 14 July 2020 to oppose the death penalty verdicts imposed on Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa by Bahrain's Court of Cassation.

James Cleverly:

We are deeply concerned that Bahrain's Court of Cassation upheld the death penalty verdicts imposed on Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa on 13 July. Lord Ahmad raised the case with the Bahraini Ambassador to the UK on 14 July and we will continue to take suitable opportunities to raise our concerns at a senior level with the Bahraini Government. The Government of Bahrain is fully aware that the UK opposes the death penalty, in all circumstances, as a matter of principle.

■ **Colombia: Homicide**

Kate Osborne: [\[82672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of a massacre in Tibu in Colombia on 18 July 2020.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of reports of killings and subsequent displacement of civilians in the Norte de Santander border areas of Cúcuta and Tibú in mid-July, following competition between rival armed groups for control of illicit economies and territory. The UK remains most concerned about the continuing presence of such groups in Colombia, and the serious impact their crimes and other activities have on local people and environments, particularly during this challenging time.

President Duque's Government has publicly committed to implementing the Peace Accords of 2016 in their entirety, and we remain steadfast in our support of the Colombian authorities as they seek to ensure sustainable peace. We are proud to be the penholder on the issue at the UN Security Council. Most recently, our Permanent Representative to the UN spoke on the continued presence of illegal armed groups in Colombia at the UN Security Council on 14 July.

We have committed almost £53 million over 5 years through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund to support the implementation of the peace process in Colombia, including across conflict-affected regions such as Norte de Santander. Many of the humanitarian organisations supported by the United Kingdom are operating in the region and working to provide support to those displaced. We will continue to monitor the situation.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

Sarah Champion: [\[78675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the current DFID funding model is retained during the merger of her Department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

James Duddridge:

This Government is committed to spending 0.7% of GNI on Official Development Assistance, which is enshrined in law. The future funding model of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be subject to the conclusions of the upcoming Integrated Review and the Spending Review.

■ **Overseas Aid: Standards**

Sarah Champion: [\[76722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish a list of projects funded by her Department that have scored a (a) B and (b) C in their annual review in the last 18 months; and what steps her Department has taken to improve the performance of failing programmes.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO publishes annual reviews of its programmes to Devtracker and the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Each annual review contains the programme's score for that year, and all previous scores. There are no plans to publish a specific list of programmes that scored B or C.

■ **Rubén González**

Patrick Grady: [\[82053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Venezuela on the case of imprisoned trade unionist, Ruben Gonzalez.

Wendy Morton:

The UK does not recognise the Maduro regime. The UK remains alarmed at the deteriorating human rights situation in Venezuela. Venezuela has a duty to uphold high standards of human rights, the more so as a member of the Human Rights Council, and to cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. The UK will continue to support the work of the UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission in Venezuela, and is committed to supporting a broad human

rights agenda in the country. On 31 August, the Maduro regime announced that it had pardoned 110 political prisoners, including Ruben Gonzalez who has been held since November 2018. Though long overdue, the release of Sr. Gonzalez will be welcome.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion: Congenital Abnormalities

Carla Lockhart: [\[78911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of allowing abortion after 24 weeks following the diagnosis of cleft lip, cleft palate, or clubfoot on how people with those conditions are treated in society.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the societal contribution of people with cleft lip, cleft palate, or clubfoot are recognised.

Helen Whately:

No such assessment has been made by the Department. However, the Government wants all children to lead happy and healthy lives to reach their full potential and is committed to improving everyone's health. The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Steve McCabe: [\[55851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for a care home that has (a) over and (b) under 50 beds with no suspected covid-19 outbreak to receive the results of covid-19 home testing from the date of that test taking place.

Helen Whately:

Between 30 July and 5 August 2020, 43.3% of test results for satellite testing, which includes care home testing, were received within 48 hours of the test being taken. Care homes predominantly use satellite test kits as they need greater control and flexibility over when tests are collected. For example, tests may be conducted over multiple days with a collection scheduled a few days later.

We are encouraging care homes to conduct testing over the weekend (Friday to Sunday) where possible to make better use of available lab capacity which should support faster turn-around times.

Turnaround times for tests conducted under Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 are published weekly on gov.uk as part of the Weekly NHS Test and Trace Bulletin.

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[78544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with representatives from the care sector on the role that sector will play in providing the Government with early data in the event of a future increase in cases of covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Since the start of this pandemic we have been working closely with the care sector, including engaging through regular meetings.

Care home managers and providers are required to contact their local Health Protection Team (HPT) as soon as possible if they have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. This enables rapid public health risk assessment and deployment of testing. Data from testing is reported to Public Health England (PHE) daily and formally reviewed weekly in Departmental meetings.

PHE HPTs already work closely with local authorities to monitor the local patterns of COVID-19 infection in the community and care sector.

In addition, in order to receive funding from the infectious Control Fund, Care homes are required to regularly submit data on Covid Case numbers and infection control measures.

■ **Care Homes: Government Assistance**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[78543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to offer (a) financial and (b) other assistance to care homes as a result of the nationwide fall in occupancy rates; and if will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We recognise that COVID-19 is imposing significant pressures on the social care sector. We have now made £3.7 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, including in adult social care.

At the 2019 Spending Review we provided additional funding for adult and children's social care using pre-COVID-19 occupancy rates. The Government has now provided councils with access to an additional £1.5 billion for adults and children's social care in 2020/21 on top of maintaining £2.5 billion of existing social care grants.

The Government will continue to monitor pressures in the National Health Service and local government and will keep future funding under review.

■ **Care Homes: Visits**

Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[77570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for the resumption of (a) nursing and (b) care home visits in England; and if he will make an

assessment of the potential merits on enabling immediate covid-secure visits for residents who have a (i) terminal illness and (b) mental and physical health condition that is affected by a lack of contact with relatives.

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 applicable to all nursing and care homes and is available at the following link:

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

Updated visiting guidance was developed with collaboration from a range of social care stakeholders, including the Alzheimer's Society. 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.

Sir Alan Campbell:

[78525]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will clarify guidance on the permitted social interactions for those in care home settings 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 applicable to all nursing and care homes and is available at the following link:

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

We appreciate the challenges which care homes face in safeguarding their residents, and we are aware that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many families and residents. Care homes can now develop their visiting policies based on a local dynamic risk assessment. This approach is based on the circumstances and needs of the individual care setting, including both residents and staff and the external COVID-19 environment.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Afzal Khan:

[61584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what medical advice he has received on the longevity of covid-19 symptoms.

Helen Whately:

The Medical Officers at the Department have advised that the time to recovery for somebody with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 depends on the severity of illness and varies from relatively quickly through to extremely prolonged. Typically, time to recovery is within 10-14 days for mild and moderate cases. If a person feels unwell for longer than this, they should contact their general practitioner.

Afzal Khan:

[\[61586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what work his Department has undertaken to better understand the long-term symptoms of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

Research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of COVID-19 is ongoing. On 4 July the Government announced a research study into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19, which is being led by UK Research and Innovation and the National Institute for Health Research.

Patients on the study from across the United Kingdom will be assessed using techniques such as advanced imaging, data collection and analysis of blood and lung samples, creating a comprehensive picture of the impact COVID-19 has on longer-term health outcomes.

The findings will support the development of new strategies for clinical and rehabilitation care, including personalised treatments based on the particular disease characteristics that a patient shows, to improve their long-term health.

■ **Coronavirus: Local Government**

Barbara Keeley:

[\[77547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral statement of 20 July 2020, Official Report, column 1850, on Coronavirus Response, for what reason enhanced levels of data were not shared with local authorities prior to 20 July 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: Public Health England (PHE) regional and health protection teams work very closely with local authorities to provide the necessary local intelligence and data that is needed for local risk assessments and action.

Prior to 20 July, PHE worked with local authorities to meet their expressed data and intelligence needs. Based on these discussions with local authorities, the Association of Directors of Public Health, Solace and Local Government Association colleagues, PHE agreed to provide a daily list of identifiable data on cases and their contacts. The Government drew up a Data Sharing Agreement with local authorities and on that basis have been providing all local authorities with access to postcode level testing data.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[77548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral statement of 20 July 2020, Official Report, column 1850, on Coronavirus Response, what assessment he has made of the effect on local covid-19 transmission rates of not sharing enhanced levels of data with local authorities prior to 20 July 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: Public Health England has shared daily and weekly local, regional and national surveillance and epidemiology reports with local

authorities since May 2020. The information contained in these reports is used to inform local risk assessments and situational awareness.

The provision of a daily list of cases and their contacts to local authorities from 20 July was an extension to these ongoing activities.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Ian Lavery:

[51979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were tested for covid-19 in (a) the UK, (b) England, (c) the North East and (d) Wansbeck constituency on each day since 28 February 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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 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.

Ian Lavery:

[51980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were tested for covid-19 on each day from 28 February 2020 to date, by reason for test.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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:

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<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.

Neil Coyle:

[61719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were tested for covid-19 on each day from 23 May 2020 to 19 June 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 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 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.

Neil Coyle:

[61720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to resume publishing data on the number of people tested each day for covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 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>

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<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.

■ Health Professions: Coronavirus

Yasmin Qureshi:

[78606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to support the mental health of (a) doctors and (b) dentists during the covid-19-outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: We recognised there would be a need for additional mental health support for all National Health Service staff and commissioned NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a comprehensive emotional, psychological and practical support package for all NHS staff.

A support package was launched on 8 April 2020 and includes a helpline and text service for counselling and support, a dedicated bereavement helpline and a range of wellbeing apps. All the support available is free and can be accessed via the following link:

<https://people.nhs.uk/help/>

The health and wellbeing of NHS staff is of vital importance. 'We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21', published on 30 July, sets out further action that will be taken to support staff health and wellbeing.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[68420]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the use of occupational risk assessment tools for health and social workers in relation to the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Employers have a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their staff under the The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Risk assessments are an important tool in ensuring staff are kept safe.

The Department has developed a Risk Reduction Framework for the adult social care sector to support employers to sensitively discuss and manage specific risks to their staff.

NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to all National Health Service organisations on 24 June requiring them to complete risk assessments for vulnerable staff within four weeks and to publish metrics to demonstrate compliance. Guidance on completing risk assessments and other supporting tools including a risk reduction framework, has been made available through NHS Employers.

Fleur Anderson:

[76122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has established a second wave health and social care to prepare for a potential second wave of covid-19 infections.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 July 2020]: To prepare the National Health Service for winter, the Government is providing an additional £3 billion of funding. This includes funding to allow the NHS to maintain the Nightingale surge capacity and continue to use the extra hospital capacity available within the independent sector.

Effective local management of any outbreaks is the first line of protection against a second wave that might overwhelm the NHS. To support local authorities, we made £300 million available and they already have robust plans in place to respond to outbreaks.

We have also made significant strides in our Test and Trace service. We have established one of the world's largest testing programmes, with capacity at around 350,000 tests every day and we have already traced around 250,000 people who may have unknowingly spread the virus.

NHS winter preparations include delivering a very significantly expanded seasonal flu vaccination programme for priority groups.

■ Health Services: Coronavirus

Gill Furniss:

[\[73932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to allow charities and local authorities to resume in-person physical and mental health support sessions as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 July 2020]: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No. 2) (England) Regulations 2020 does not stop in-person physical and mental health support sessions from being held. The local authorities and charities who operate these sessions must decide on whether it is possible to do so whilst following relevant COVID-19 secure guidance.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Layla Moran:

[\[59588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much each of the NHS Nightingale hospitals cost to (a) create and (b) equip.

Edward Argar:

Current estimates provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement to the Department indicate that the total set up costs for all seven Nightingale sites equates to approximately £220 million.

The following table breaks down the costs by each Nightingale Hospital.

COSTS (£000s)	TOTAL COSTS
London	57,411
Birmingham	66,408
Manchester	23,471
Harrogate	27,314
Bristol	14,209
Exeter	11,163
Sunderland	20,102

COSTS (£000s)	TOTAL COSTS
Total	220,078

June 2020

Rachel Reeves: [\[64170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason no procurement contracts been published to date relating to the construction and maintenance of the seven Nightingale field hospitals.

Rachel Reeves: [\[64171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the contracts relating to the construction and maintenance of the seven Nightingale field hospitals will be published.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 29 June 2020]: Contracts in the form of licences to occupy have been entered into for the Nightingale hospital sites. 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.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper: [\[78577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 20 April 2020 on furlough for agency or bank staff at NHS Professionals.

Helen Whately:

I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 12 August 2020.

■ **Primary Health Care: Capital Investment**

Seema Malhotra: [\[78674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 24 February 2020 to Question 14993, whether he has had additional discussions since that date with NHS England on alternative procurement routes for primary care modernisation proposals after the suspension in 2019 of new Local Improvement Finance Trust projects.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 2 September 2020]: 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 information technology and 'business as usual' capital.

Rare Diseases: Carers**Mark Tami:**[\[78529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a separate strategy for supporting families and carers of people with rare diseases, including support for their (a) mental health, (b) relationships, and (c) professional careers.

Helen Whately:

The Government recognises the vital role unpaid carers play, especially during this difficult period now more than ever.

In June 2018, the Government published its cross-Government Carers Action Plan 2018-2020 to increase identification, recognition and support for unpaid carers. It sets out a two-year programme of targeted work to support unpaid carers. It puts a focus on practical actions and gives visibility to the work already underway or planned within Government. The action plan is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/713781/carers-action-plan-2018-2020.pdf

Good progress has been made towards fulfilling the commitments set out in the Carers Action Plan. Last July we published the 'Carers Action Plan: 1-year progress review' which showcases some of the key commitments we made within the action plan and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carers-action-plan-2018-to-2020-1-year-progress-review>

As work within the Carers Action Plan comes to an end this year, we plan to produce a final report and steps outlining the next phase of work supporting unpaid carers.

The Government has no plans to publish a separate strategy for supporting families and carers of people with rare diseases.

Social Services: Fees and Charges**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[78521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people are not required to sell their property to meet the cost of social care.

Helen Whately:

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

We are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and to find long term solutions for one of the biggest challenges we face as a society. There are complex questions to address and it is important that we give these issues our full consideration in the light of current circumstances.

■ Social Services: Protective Clothing**Helen Hayes:**[\[78778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the on-going additional costs to the care sector of the need for personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak in the (a) short, (b) medium and (c) long-term.

Helen Hayes:[\[78779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the capacity of the care sector to meet the costs of the additional personal protection equipment required for covid-19 infection control in the (a) short, (b) medium and (c) long-term.

Helen Hayes:[\[78780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make additional funding available to the care sector to cover the additional on-going costs of personal protective equipment required for covid-19 infection control.

Helen Whately:

The Government recognises that COVID-19 is imposing significant pressures on the social care sector. The Government has now made £3.7 billion available to local authorities so they can address pressures on local services caused by the pandemic, such as adult social care, including the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).

As of 29 June, we have released 149 million items of PPE to designated wholesalers for onward sale to social care providers. This includes 13 million facemasks, 57.6 million aprons and 78.3 million gloves. We have also introduced a temporary zero rate of VAT that applies to supplies of PPE as defined by Public Health England's COVID-19 PPE guidance on 24 April 2020.

The Government will continue to monitor pressures in the health and social care systems and will keep future funding under review.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal Experiments: Dogs****Alex Sobel:**[\[13058\]](#)

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, what the five experiments were that were conducted on dogs for the purpose of protection of the natural environment.

Victoria Atkins:

With reference to the report entitled Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, 5 procedures were undertaken on dogs for the purpose of protection of the natural environment. Specifically, these procedures were conducted to investigate the disinfection of contaminated animal facilities in the interests of the health or welfare of human beings or animals.

Alex Sobel:[\[13059\]](#)

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, what type of tests comprised the 92 procedures conducted on dogs to satisfy plant protection product legislation; what type of products were tested; and what steps he is taking to (a) reduce and (b) replace the use of dogs for those tests.

Victoria Atkins:

A) With reference to the report entitled Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, the 92 procedures conducted on dogs to satisfy plant protection product legislation. These procedures were undertaken for toxicity and other safety testing, and for quality control and efficacy and tolerance testing purposes. The Home Office does not hold further information on the type of product tested.

B) Dogs are a specially protected species under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. The Home Office will only grant a project licence for a programme of work using dogs where the purpose of the programme of work specified in the licence can only be achieved by their use, or where it is not practicable to use other suitable animals.

■ Animal Experiments: Primates**Alex Sobel:**[\[13056\]](#)

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 an increase in the number of non-human primates that came from a first generation primate used for the first time in experimental procedures.

Victoria Atkins:

With reference to the report entitled Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain 2018, published in July 2019, the change in the published figures for the first-generation primates (F1) from 2017 to 2018 was likely due to confusion amongst those establishments supplying the data over the definition of a self-sustaining colony. In the 2018 return some establishments reported the number of F1 non-human primates within a self-sustaining colony.

■ **Assaults on Police**

Sarah Jones: [82286]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers have retired as a result of injury received on duty in each of the last three years.

Sarah Jones: [82287]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers have been assaulted by a deadly weapon while on duty in each of the last three years.

Sarah Jones: [82288]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of the number of police officers assaulted while on duty are BAME, in each of the last three years.

Sarah Jones: [82289]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many police officers have been subject to unarmed physical attacks while on duty in each of the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of police officers that have left the service through 'medical retirement' in the annual 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

However, data on how many of those medical retirements that are due to injury are not available from the data held centrally.

The Home Office collects data on the number of assaults on police officers and these are published quarterly by the Office for National Statistics. The latest figures, for the year ending March 2020, can be accessed on the ONS website (available here):

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

However, it not possible to identify the ethnicity of victims, nor is it possible to identify whether or not a weapon was used in the assault.

■ British National (Overseas): Hong Kong**Paul Girvan:****[82296]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is the Government's policy that British Nationals (Overseas) in Hong Kong who are in the UK before January 2021 will be able to apply for a 30 month stay while in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary was pleased to announce on 22 July details of a new immigration route for Hong Kong British National (Overseas) citizens. Further information can be found at:

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

British National (Overseas) citizens already in the UK will be able to apply from within the UK. They will have a choice of applying for a period of either 30 months (renewable for a further 30 months) or five years' leave to remain in the UK.

■ Financial Services: Fraud**Dawn Butler:****[82655]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) financial fraud committed by rogue traders and (b) doorstep crimes committed during the covid-19 lockdown.

James Brokenshire:

We are aware that criminals are attempting to exploit opportunities around the coronavirus. The Government and law enforcement colleagues are working tirelessly to identify and disrupt those seeking to commit these crimes.

We have worked closely with National Trading Standards, the Financial Conduct Authority and other key partners to raise public awareness. For example, we launched a gov.uk page on coronavirus related fraud and cybercrime, including easy-to-follow steps for people to better protect themselves, as well as signposting all relevant advice and tips.

This page can currently be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime>

National Trading Standards, using their 500,000 strong network of "Friends Against Scams" launched a targeted campaign during lockdown to encourage people to protect their friends and neighbours from COVID doorsteps scams.

■ Hygiene: Products**Sir Paul Beresford:****[81490]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the fire risk of alcohol-based hand sanitisers being stored in large quantities in

buildings throughout the UK; and what steps she is taking to educate the public on the fire risks of alcohol-based hand-rubs.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office has considered the fire risks associated with alcohol-based hand sanitisers in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The NFCC issued a press statement setting out the low risk of such products causing a fire and the need for a spark to come into contact with the substance.

Where alcohol-based hand sanitisers are stored in large quantities, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires the responsible person for that premises to consider the fire risks and ensure these are mitigated to as low as reasonably practicable.

■ **Official Secrets: Legislation**

Alyn Smith:

[\[82384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Official Secrets Acts 1911 to 1989.

James Brokenshire:

As set out in the Queen's Speech in December 2019, the Government is developing legislation to tackle hostile activity conducted by foreign states.

As part of this we will carefully consider the Law Commission's recommendations for reform of the OSAs, within their report on the Protection of Official Data which was published on 1 September 2020.

■ **Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships**

John Spellar:

[\[77509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the backlog is for the registration of births.

Kevin Foster:

Birth registrations in England and Wales are being completed where they can be safely delivered in line with public health and local authority guidelines.

There are currently around 97,400 unregistered births; this includes those within the normal 42 days period for registering a birth.

■ **Visas**

Stephen Timms:

[\[81495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many visa extensions were granted to people in the UK in each of the last five years; and how many of those extensions were granted to people subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds condition in each of those years.

Kevin Foster:

Data on the number of extensions granted in the UK are published in table Exe_D01 of the managed migration detailed datasets in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/managed-migration-datasets> .

Most migrants visiting, studying, working or joining family in the UK are subject to a No Recourse to Public Fund (NRPF) condition until they have obtained indefinite leave to remain.

Exceptions are made in respect of some migrants, such as families here on the basis of family life/Article 8, where the condition is lifted if the family can provide evidence that they would otherwise be destitute. Migrants with leave under the family and human rights routes can apply to have the NRPF restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances.

■ Visas: Health Professions**Ruth Jones:****[82367]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to extend eligibility for the health and care visa to include physiotherapy and rehabilitation staff earning the equivalent of the NHS Bands 3 and 4 pay scales to help the UK meet post-covid-19 demand for rehabilitation services.

Kevin Foster:

Those currently applying for the Health and Care Visa must meet the Tier 2 (General) immigration route requirements. Under Tier 2 (General), a migrant worker must be filling a degree level job and must be in NHS pay band 5 (or equivalent) or above.

The UK's new Points-Based Immigration System, which will come into effect from January 2021, will change the skill level requirements – to A level and equivalent and above - and salary requirements, allowing more physiotherapy and rehabilitation staff to come to the UK under the Skilled Worker route.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Housing: Construction****Matt Rodda:****[82333]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has for a public consultation on the Government's proposals for changes to the planning system; what changes to regulations on (a) height, (b) appearance and (c) quality are proposed; what steps he plans to take to ensure that new houses will be built in addition to flats; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that new houses will be built on brownfield land and not in the countryside.

Christopher Pincher:

Public consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper began on 6 August and closes on 29 October. The White Paper sets out an ambitious vision for improving the design of buildings and places, through the widespread use of design codes and pattern books that are supported by local communities. The White Paper also sets out proposals for a binding housing requirement that would be adjusted to take account of local constraints, such as the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The requirement figures would need to reflect the importance of using brownfield land, but ultimately it would be for local authorities to decide how best to meet their housing requirement locally, including the different types of homes needed in each area.

■ **Local Plans: Housing****James Wild:****[82501]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will issue guidance to the Planning Inspectorate on appeals relating to housing development sites which local authorities have begun removing from local plans.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and their degree of consistency with policies in the Framework. This is made clear in existing Planning Practice Guidance.

■ **Marriage: Coronavirus****Thangam Debbonaire:****[82060]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what criteria he will use to decide when to increase the number of people permitted to attend a wedding ceremony; and when he plans to review the current guidance.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Wedding ceremonies are now permitted to take place and we have published guidance on how they can be carried out safely;

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

There is currently a limit of thirty people for attendance at the ceremony, although local restrictions may stipulate a lower number. This limit is to ensure the safety of all those in attendance. There would need to be fewer than thirty people present where social distancing cannot be maintained within the venue.

Evidence on the most effective steps that can be taken to limit the transmission of the virus continues to be regularly reviewed. This guidance may be updated in the future in response to changing scientific understanding.

■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Stephen Timms:

[\[81492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to support private tenants who find themselves unable to pay their rent debt after evictions are allowed to resume as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Christopher Pincher:

To help prevent tenants getting into financial hardship or rent arrears, the Government has put in place an unprecedented support package. This has included the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, £9.3 billion of additional support through the welfare system, and increasing the Local Housing Allowance rate to the 30th percentile. These significant financial measures will help support tenants to continue to pay their living costs, including rental payments.

The Government has brought forward legislation that means from 29 August, landlords must provide six months' notice in most circumstances, including for Section 21 notices and rent arrears under 6 months. This will be in force until 31 March 2021. If tenants are unable to afford their rent, they should in the first instance speak to their landlord to agree a solution, or consider moving to avoid building up unsustainable debt.

When courts do reopen, they will carefully prioritise the most egregious cases, including anti-social behaviour, fraud, and domestic abuse. New court rules will also require landlords seeking possession of their property to set out in their claim any relevant information about a tenant's circumstances, including information on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Where this information is not provided, judges will have the ability to adjourn proceedings. If a landlord made a claim to the court before 3 August, they must notify the Court and their tenant that they still intend to seek repossession before the case will proceed.

■ Religious Hatred: Islam

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[81894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle (a) Islamophobia and (b) the number of Islamophobic incidents.

Luke Hall:

This Government remains committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of hate crime. It is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practising their religion and we continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to Islamophobia.

We have continued to work closely with Muslim communities, to tackle hate against them, including underlying issues and trends, and continue supporting the work of the cross-Government Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group which provides valuable advice to Government on challenges faced by Britain's Muslim communities and how to address those challenges. We have also supported Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-

Muslim Attacks) with just over £2.8 million between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred.

■ **Social Services: Pay**

Layla Moran: [\[82335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the statement entitled, Government response to the 33rd report of the NHS Pay Review Body, HCWS409, what discussions his Department has had with representatives from social care providers on a pay rise for social care staff in the next year.

Mr Simon Clarke:

This is a matter for the Department of Health and Social Care.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Arms Trade: Belarus**

Owen Thompson: [\[82146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many licences for arms exports to Belarus her Department has approved in the last 12 months.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

There are EU sanctions against Belarus already, including an arms embargo and a ban on the export of equipment that might be used for internal repression. Britain cannot issue export licences for items prohibited by these sanctions.

More generally, information about export licences issued, granted and refused is publicly available at: [gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data).

■ **Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[81945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Written Statement of 7 July 2020 on Trade Update, what the threshold is at which the Government would assess the number of incidents violating International Humanitarian Law as unacceptable in the licensing of arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen, regardless of whether they constituted a pattern; and what the basis is for the level of that threshold.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

All licence applications are considered on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Specifically, Criterion 2c makes sure that we do not grant licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law. My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for

International Trade set out in her Written Ministerial Statement of 7th July how she has fully considered Criterion 2c in relation to the re-taking of the licensing decisions, in accordance with the Court of Appeal's judgment.

HM Government is able to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require, and this is done in line with the Consolidated Criteria.

■ Department for International Trade: Meetings

Owen Thompson:

[\[82145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how her department defines personal meetings in the context of classifying meetings to enable decisions of whether to publish them in the Government's quarterly transparency data.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade takes issues over transparency and potential conflicts of interest incredibly seriously and so adheres to the Cabinet Office guidelines in relation to all meetings.

■ Human Rights: Yemen

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[81946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Written Statement of 7 July 2020 on Trade Update and the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 68798, what criteria were used to determine whether the 535 incidents which, for the purpose of the Government's analysis are being treated as violations of International Humanitarian Law, constituted a pattern.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law (IHL) was applied to over 300 incidents. The assessments used all available sources of information, including some that are necessarily confidential and sensitive. As a result, we are not able to provide details of individual assessments for national security reasons.

We have assessed that there were a small number of incidents that were 'possible' violations, which have been treated for the purposes of this analysis as 'violations' of international humanitarian law.

The Statement made by my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade on 7th July was clear that we sought to determine whether these 'violations' were indicative of:

- (i) any patterns of non-compliance;
- (ii) a lack of commitment on the part of Saudi Arabia to comply with IHL; and/or
- (iii) a lack of capacity or systemic weaknesses which might give rise to a clear risk of IHL breaches.

Our analysis did not reveal any such patterns, trends or systemic weaknesses.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia**Ruth Jones:**[\[82376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the potential for a trade deal with Australia being completed by 31 December 2020.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Australia are both committed to negotiating an ambitious agreement at pace. The first round of talks – which took place between 29 June and 10 July 2020 - have laid the groundwork for greater progress. The Government will make its next statement on progress following the second round of talks, which will take place later this month.

■ Trade Agreements: Environment Protection**Geraint Davies:**[\[78470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with UK trade partners on maintaining environmental protection standards in trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of the environment and we are committed to meeting our ambitious environmental objectives in our future trade policy.

Of course, Britain has long supported the promotion of our values globally, and we will continue now that we have left the EU. 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, but we are exploring all options in the design of future trade and investment agreements including possible environment provisions, to make sure that future trade is sustainable and upholds Britain's high environmental standards.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights**Christian Matheson:**[\[905375\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with UK trade partners on including clauses on human rights in future trade agreements.

Greg Hands:

While our approach to negotiations will vary between partners, it will always allow HM Government to have open discussions on a range of important issues, including human rights. We have a strong history of safeguarding rights globally and will not compromise our high standards in trade agreements.

■ Trade Agreements: International Labour Organisation**Navendu Mishra:** [\[905360\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the UK's trade partners on protecting International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

While the details of free trade agreements are reserved for formal negotiations, HM Government has been clear that increased trade does not have to come at the expense of our high labour standards. The United Kingdom is an active member of the International Labour Organisation and we will continue to uphold our world-leading standards and international commitments.

Ian Byrne: [\[905378\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the UK's trade partners on protecting International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

While the details of free trade agreements are reserved for formal negotiations, HM Government has been clear that increased trade does not have to come at the expense of our high labour standards. The United Kingdom is an active member of the International Labour Organisation and we will continue to uphold our world-leading standards and international commitments.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[905385\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the UK's trade partners on protecting International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

While the details of free trade agreements are reserved for formal negotiations, HM Government has been clear that increased trade does not have to come at the expense of our high labour standards. The United Kingdom is an active member of the International Labour Organisation and we will continue to uphold our world-leading standards and international commitments.

■ Trade Agreements: New Zealand**Ruth Jones:** [\[82375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the likelihood of a trade deal with New Zealand being completed by 31 December 2020.

Greg Hands:

The UK and New Zealand are both committed to negotiating an ambitious agreement at pace. The first round of talks – which took place between 13th and 24th July 2020 – have laid the groundwork for greater progress. The Government will make its next statement on progress following the second round of talks, which is currently planned to take place in October.

■ Trade Agreements: Sri Lanka**Stephen Kinnock:**[\[81955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Sri Lankan Government's announcement of 27 February 2020 that it would withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council resolution 30/1, whether she has raised human rights during the current trade negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Sri Lanka is a valuable trading partner for Britain. Whilst HM Government has not yet undertaken any formal trade negotiations with Sri Lanka, both countries have expressed a mutual commitment to identifying and reducing barriers to trade, and are actively seeking ways to further enhance our trading relationship.

HM Government has raised rights and responsibilities with the Government of Sri Lanka, as part of wide-ranging discussions between the Foreign Secretary and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

■ Whisky: USA**Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[81986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if her Department will work with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network to ensure that the 25 per cent tariff imposed by the US on exports of Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Whisky liqueurs is removed.

Greg Hands:

The Government takes the negative impact of US tariffs on Scotch Whisky very seriously. These tariffs are unnecessary, unhelpful and harm industry and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Department for International Trade engages regularly with Scottish industries which are unfairly impacted by the tariffs. On 13 August I held calls with the Scotch Whisky Association, Walkers Shortbread, Diageo and others, to update them on the outcome of the US August tariff review and to better understand their concerns.

The UK continues to lobby the US for the settlement of the Airbus/Boeing disputes and the removal of tariffs.

Patricia Gibson:[\[82067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to seek the removal of US tariffs on Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Whisky liqueurs.

Greg Hands:

The Government takes the negative impact of US tariffs on Single-malt Scotch Whisky and Whisky liqueurs, resulting from the Airbus dispute, very seriously. These tariffs are unnecessary, unhelpful and harm industry and consumers on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the beginning, the UK has pressed the US for a fair and balanced settlement to the Airbus and Boeing disputes. Most recently, in early August, the Secretary of State

for International Trade visited the US and raised this issue with US Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, and pressed for the removal of all tariffs as soon as possible.

JUSTICE

■ Prison Accommodation

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[82221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of inmates are housed in double cells in each prison as at September 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

Upon arrival into custody, all prisoners' suitability to share a cell is risk assessed. These assessments are based on numerous factors including index offence, health concerns and security information (such as beliefs and prejudices). There are benefits to some prisoners sharing cells for the positive impact it has on mental health and stress levels, in addition to many prisoners preferring to share a cell.

The table below identifies the number of prisoners sharing cells holding two or more people as at 1 September 2020. The detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS SHARING CELLS PROPORTION		PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS SHARING CELLS PROPORTION	
Altcourse	763	68%	Leicester	229	71%
Ashfield	144	37%	Lewes	232	41%
Askham Grange	0	0%	Leyhill	0	0%
Aylesbury	0	0%	Lincoln	388	69%
Bedford	239	65%	Lindholme	298	32%
Belmarsh	433	56%	Littlehey	68	6%
Berwyn	1040	61%	Liverpool	450	63%
Birmingham	593	64%	Long Lartin	0	0%
Brinsford	230	48%	Low Newton	4	1%
Bristol	251	50%	Lowdham Grange	8	1%
Brixton	544	75%	Maidstone	8	2%

PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS		PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS	
	SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION		SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION
Bronzefield	138	27%	Manchester	94	14%
Buckley Hall	68	16%	Moorland	280	32%
Bullington	701	68%	Mount	236	23%
Bure	4	1%	New Hall	28	8%
Cardiff	450	62%	North Sea Camp	127	35%
Channings Wood	80	12%	Northumberland2		0%
Chelmsford	328	48%	Norwich	271	37%
Coldingley	2	0%	Nottingham	408	49%
Cookham Wood	0	0%	Oakwood	766	38%
Dartmoor	0	0%	Onley	114	18%
Deerbolt	10	3%	Parc	708	45%
Doncaster	745	69%	Pentonville	774	75%
Dovegate	246	21%	Peterborough	394	47%
Downview	0	0%	Peterborough (female)	128	38%
Drake Hall	24	10%	Portland	118	25%
Durham	742	82%	Prescoed	14	6%
East Sutton Park	42	68%	Preston	507	74%
Eastwood Park	108	31%	Ranby	294	31%
Elmley	638	60%	Risley	142	14%
Erlestoke	18	4%	Rochester	278	44%
Exeter	330	78%	Rye Hill	170	26%
Featherstone	76	12%	Send	0	0%

PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS		PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS	
	SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION		SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION
Feltham	90	28%	Springhill	90	35%
Ford	218	44%	Stafford	438	66%
Forest Bank	831	59%	Standford Hill	0	0%
Foston Hall	118	39%	Stocken	232	23%
Frankland	0	0%	Stoke Heath	278	41%
Full Sutton	0	0%	Styal	221	61%
Garth	8	1%	Sudbury	294	57%
Gartree	20	3%	Swaleside	0	0%
Grendon	0	0%	Swansea	288	77%
Guys Marsh	78	19%	Swinfen Hall	62	11%
Hatfield	26	9%	Thameside	780	66%
Haverigg	0	0%	Thorn Cross	4	1%
Hewell	522	63%	Usk	199	87%
High Down	660	57%	Verne	96	17%
Highpoint	212	17%	Wakefield	2	0%
Hindley	224	41%	Wandsworth	1144	77%
Hollesley Bay	42	9%	Warren Hill	0	0%
Holme House	676	60%	Wayland	266	28%
Hull	542	55%	Wealstun	0	0%
Humber	240	25%	Werrington	0	0%
Huntercombe	123	30%	Wetherby	0	0%
Isis	192	36%	Whatton	104	13%
Isle of Wight	124	13%	Whitemoor	0	0%
Kirkham	12	2%	Winchester	228	47%
Kirklevington Grange	0	0%	Woodhill	8	2%

PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS		PRISON	TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS	
	SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION		SHARING CELLS	PROPORTION
Lancaster Farms	100	19%	Wormwood Scrubs	606	56%
Leeds	791	76%	Wymott	0	0%
Grand Total				27714	35%

■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[81738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July to Question 76655, whether the accommodation support scheme for prison leavers was extended beyond 31 July 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

As the Honourable Member is aware, the Government exceptionally allocated funding of up to £8.5m to provide accommodation for those released from prison who were at risk of homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic. This emergency funding was available for a limited time and initially ran from 18 May until 31 July. Having kept the operation of the scheme under review, it was agreed to extend it past the 31 July to the 31 August as the public health and public protection risks warranted it. The scheme has now concluded but may recommence if future public health and public protection risks require it.

We continue to work with councils and charities to secure suitable accommodation, while investigating long-term solutions to help offenders turn their backs on crime and to prevent homelessness.

■ Reading Prison: Sales

Matt Rodda:

[\[82329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the reasons are for the time taken in selling Reading Gaol; and when negotiations on the sale of that site will be concluded.

Matt Rodda:

[\[82330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress has been made on the negotiations with the preferred bidder for Reading Gaol.

Matt Rodda:

[\[82331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the deadline is for the negotiations with a preferred bidder for Reading Gaol; and what procurement process his Department plans to use to reopen its search for a new preferred bidder in the event that negotiations break down.

Lucy Frazer:

There have been some delays due to the coronavirus pandemic. The sale of Reading Prison is progressing and we expect to conclude negotiations with the preferred bidder this autumn. All matters relating to negotiations for the sale are commercially confidential.

There is no current deadline for the negotiations with the preferred bidder for Reading Prison.

■ **Social Security Benefits and Welfare Tax Credits: Appeals**

Colleen Fletcher:**[81968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of appeals to the tribunals service in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England which related to (i) personal independence payments, (ii) employment and support allowance, (iii) income support, (iv) jobseeker's allowance, (v) tax credits and (vi) universal credit were successful in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

Information about the outcomes of appeals in the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) (SSCS) is published at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics

SSCS appeals are listed into the hearing venue nearest to the appellant's home address. The published data (which can be viewed at the link above) provide information about the outcomes of (i) Personal Independence Payment (PIP), (ii) Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and (vi) Universal Credit (UC) appeals for hearing venues covering (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England for the period January – March 2020, the latest period for which data are available.

The table below contains the requested information for (iii) Income Support (IS), (iv) Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and (v) Tax Credits:

PROPORTION ¹ OF APPEALS DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF THE APPELLANT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO MARCH 2020 (THE LATEST PERIOD FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE)

	IS	JSA	Tax Credits ²
Coventry	0%	~	0%
West Midlands ³	~	~	41%
England ⁴	35%	43%	36%

¹ Proportion based on the number of cases found in favour of the appellant at a tribunal hearing, as a percentage of the cases heard at a tribunal hearing.

² Includes Working Family Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit.

3. SSCS data are recorded by the office that dealt with the case, and if the case went to oral hearing, the location of the tribunal hearing, normally the hearing venue nearest to the appellant's home address. Cases relating to the West Midlands region are attributed to the following SSCS venues: Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Coventry, Nuneaton, Stoke, Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester.

4. Excludes SSCS Scotland Region and Wales Region.

~ Equates to a value where cases heard were fewer than five.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and are the best data available.

The data may differ slightly to that of the published statistics as these data were run on a different date.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Broadcasting: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[78914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse will be provided to support mental health in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse will be provided to tackle paramilitarism in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse will be provided to tackle deprivation and improve opportunity in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse will be provided to support marking the 2021 centenary year and related projects in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional

funding from the public purse will be provided to establish a Culture and Community Fund in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse will be provided to support languages and broadcasting in Northern Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse has been allocated to support (a) the armed forces and veterans and (b) a new Veteran's Commissioner.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse has been allocated to the International Fund for Ireland.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse has been allocated to the Londonderry addiction centre.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 53 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, how much additional funding from the public purse has been allocated to a fund to promote the competitiveness of Northern Ireland's economy.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 49 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, what progress has been made on discussions with NI Screen on broadening the remit of the Ulster Scots Broadcasting Fund.

Carla Lockhart: [\[78928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to page 49 of the New Decade, New approach document, published in January 2020, what progress has been made on providing funding to (a) establish the Castlereagh Foundation and (b) support academic research through universities and other partners to explore identity and the shifting patterns of social identity in Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government has provided £2 billion of funding to support implementation of the New Decade, New Approach deal. £545 million of this has already been

allocated. The £2 billion includes a £1bn Barnett-based investment guarantee from the UK Government, which will include significant new funding to turbocharge infrastructure investment. This guarantee will apply in all circumstances, and allow the Executive to plan new investment over a five year period. £245m will support the transformation of public services, including transformation across health, education and justice. Funding release will be tied to the delivery of reform. The deal also provided £550m to help put the Executive's finances on a sustainable footing, including £200 million over three years to resolve the nurses' pay dispute immediately and deliver pay parity.

Alongside this, the UK Government has provided £60m of capital and resource funding to deliver a Northern Ireland Graduate Entry Medical School in Derry/Londonderry, which has now been approved by the Executive. The UK Government will provide £50m over two years to support the rollout of ultra-low emission public transport.

The Honourable Member has inquired about a range of specific areas of funding, including mental health support, tackling deprivation, tackling paramilitarism, the Castlereagh Foundation, centenary funding, culture and community funding, language and broadcasting support, support for the armed forces and veterans, IFI funding and a fund to promote the competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy.

£140m of funding has been set aside in the New Decade, New Approach package to address Northern Ireland's unique circumstances. The overall profiling of this spend to address Northern Ireland's unique circumstances remains subject to final decisions by ministers. Where identified projects fall within devolved competencies, further discussions are needed with the Executive to establish the amount of funding which is required. We look forward to being able to confirm the detail across all these projects as soon as it is possible to do so.

SCOTLAND

■ Scottish Government: Coronavirus

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[82560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what assessment his Department has made of the level of additional fiscal support made available to the Scottish Government in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Alister Jack:

We have confronted this virus as one United Kingdom and worked with the devolved administrations every step of the way.

On top of an unprecedented package of UK-wide support for businesses and individuals, totalling £330 billion, we are providing £6.5 billion to help Scotland fight coronavirus. This is including an extra £2.7 billion announced this Summer alone.

We provided an unprecedented upfront guarantee, which will give the Scottish Government the certainty and financial flexibility to plan for the months ahead.

TRANSPORT

■ Acceleration Unit

Kerry McCarthy: [\[81628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the work of the new Acceleration Unit is aligned with the Government's net-zero commitment.

Rachel Maclean:

This is an ambitious Government, committed to delivering on our decarbonisation targets. The Acceleration Unit, which is directly accountable to the Transport Secretary, will be looking at projects across our portfolio and considering how we can deliver things quicker, better and greener – potentially speeding up our path to net-zero. Furthermore, the incoming head of the unit has a background championing environmental causes and a proven track record supporting public transport, including restoring the Beeching lines.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[81629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure the work of the Acceleration Unit supports the outcomes of the Decarbonising Transport Plan.

Rachel Maclean:

We have been clear on our ambitions on decarbonising transport and achieving net-zero emissions. The Acceleration Unit, which is directly accountable to the Transport Secretary, will help support these objectives through the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, by helping us deliver projects more quickly. Furthermore, the incoming head of the unit has a background championing environmental causes and a proven track record supporting public transport, including restoring the Beeching lines.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis: [\[81905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on supporting airlines to decrease the time taken to process and issue refunds for flights cancelled due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The department regularly engages with the Civil Aviation Authority and industry groups. The government has been clear that airlines should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund, if it is requested and this should be done in a timely manner.

The Civil Aviation Authority undertook a review of the refund policies of all UK airlines, as well as a number of international airlines that operate flights to and from the UK. The CAA has utilised this review to influence airlines to change their processes and practices in order to improve performance in providing refunds. The

CAA's actions have led to an improved quality of service and performance from most airlines. The CAA continues to work with carriers to drive down waiting times, but balancing the support businesses need during this unprecedented situation.

■ **Bus Service Operators Grant**

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[82059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 17 May 2019 to Question 252001 on Bus Service Operators Grant, by what date he plans to bring forward plans to reform the Bus Service Operators Grant.

Rachel Maclean:

At the present time it is still our intention to proceed with plans to reform the Bus Service Operators Grant, however due to the ongoing pandemic these plans have temporarily been placed on hold and no specific date is envisaged at this time. The digitalisation of the grant process has also been placed on hold, however the department is committed to delivering this as part of the Governments Digital by Default Agenda and we aspire to resuming this before the end of the year.

■ **Buses and Large Goods Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions**

Sarah Olney: [\[82246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many complaints the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency received on smoky vehicles relating to (a) lorries, and (b) buses.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has received 2051 complaints about smoky vehicles during 2020. It does not hold separate data for lorries and buses.

Sarah Olney: [\[82247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reasons the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency does not accept reports on excessively smoky vehicles other than lorries and buses.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has no statutory powers to act on reports of excessively smoky vehicles other than lorries and buses.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Inland Waterways**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[81825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Canal and River Trust's proposals for 30 towpath improvement schemes across the country.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[81826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using canal towpaths to provide safe walking and cycling routes to deprived neighbourhoods.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[81827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the role of canal towpaths in his plans to increase walking and cycling.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 28 July the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost cycling and walking, where half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel.

This will significantly increase the funding available for local authorities to deliver cycling and walking infrastructure, including on canal towpaths. Further details of funding for the different commitments in the Plan will be determined as part of the Spending Review process in the autumn.

■ **Cycling: Helmets**

Alex Cunningham: [\[81892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to make it compulsory to wear a helmet when cycling.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government considered this matter in detail as part of its cycling and walking safety review in 2018.

In summary, the Government will continue to encourage cyclists, especially children, to wear helmets, but does not intend to legislate to require it. Supporting safe cycling, including helmet use, will be a feature of many of the programmes outlined in the Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan being supported by the £2 billion of funding for active travel.

■ **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Coronavirus**

Patricia Gibson: [\[82065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he will take to (a) improve response rates to calls to the DVLA and (b) ensure that key workers are able to book a driving test.

Rachel Maclean:

(a) The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has reconfigured one of its buildings to create additional space for contact centre staff and installed screens to maximise the number of staff answering calls. The contact centre's opening hours have increased at weekends and will shortly be increasing during the working week.

(b) The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is responsible for driving tests. It has added extra call taking capacity to improve response rates. The practical driving test service is now open to all driving test candidates including key workers.

■ Driving Licences: Coronavirus

Paul Girvan: [\[82306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will temporarily extend the 12 month driving license exchange period for people that hold a non-EU driving license during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

There are no plans to extend the twelve-month licence grace period for people that hold a non-EU driving licence. Drivers should either exchange their licences if they are eligible or take a driving test. Those who continue to drive, do so illegally.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[81476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Greengauge21's report entitled HS2's Eastern Arm, published July 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government has made clear its commitment to delivering HS2 Phase 2b and transformational rail improvements. The Integrated Rail Plan to be published at end of year will consider how best to do that, with a focus on integration with proposed major rail investments in the North and Midlands and ensuring that benefits are delivered from investments more quickly.

Fiona Bruce: [\[81797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the budget is of (a) Phase 2b east and (b) Phase 2b west of High Speed Two.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Full Business Case for Phase One sets out the central cost estimate for the whole of Phase 2b at £39bn (including contingency). The funding allocations for HS2 including phase 2b are being reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020, which is due to conclude later this Autumn.

■ High Speed Two: Business Expenses

Dame Cheryl Gillan: [\[81477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason details of business expenses, travel costs and hospitality figures have not been published for HS2 personnel since September 2019; and if he will publish those figures.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd has now published all business expense, travel costs and hospitality up to March 2020 on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-ltd-business-expense-travel-costs-and-hospitality-january-to-march-2020> and will be publishing its 2020/21 Quarter One data this month.

■ High Speed Two: Coronavirus**Fiona Bruce:****[81798]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HS2 Ltd employees have been furloughed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd has not furloughed any employees.

■ Members: Correspondence**Damian Collins:****[81816]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 11 June 2019, 19 October 2019 and 25 June 2020 from the hon. Member for Folkestone and Hythe, regarding his constituent Mrs Old and the formerly proposed lorry park at Stanford West; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

There have been multiple replies sent regarding Mrs Old in the past twelve months. The Department will contact the Hon Member's office and provide copies of any replies that you have not received. The Department has no record of any correspondence being received on 25th June; if a copy can be provided, a response will be sent as soon as possible.

■ Motorcycles: Safety**Patricia Gibson:****[82066]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will include the safety of motorcyclists in the review of the Highway Code.

Rachel Maclean:

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Safety Review Call for Evidence, published in March 2018, gathered information on how to tackle the safety issues that cyclists and pedestrians face, or perceive, when travelling on our roads, to support the Government's aim of increasing cycling and walking.

The subsequent Government response set out a two-year plan of action which identified reviewing the guidance in The Highway Code to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians as a top priority. The review of The Highway Code is therefore a direct response to that action.

■ Pedestrian Crossings

Andrew Gwynne: [\[81644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implied zebra crossings on side roads.

Rachel Maclean:

The layout of zebra crossings is prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD). Under TSRGD, a zebra crossing must consist of black and white stripes, give-way lines, zig-zag markings and yellow globes. TSRGD also requires a driver or cyclist to give way to anyone on the crossing.

Installation of zebra crossings is the responsibility of the local traffic authority. A zebra crossing consisting only of black and white stripes, as proposed by Transport for Greater Manchester, would not meet the requirements of TSRGD, and as such pedestrians would have no right of way when using it.

The Department is aware that Transport for Greater Manchester have been carrying out some research to support their suggestion to introduce simplified zebra crossings at side roads in Manchester, but this has been paused during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Zebra crossings have been in use for a long time in this country, they are widely recognised and understood, and have a good road safety record, and the Department has no plans to change their design.

■ Public Transport: Greater London

Meg Hillier: [\[81653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the Equalities Impact Assessment on the decision to remove free travel for under-18s in London.

Rachel Maclean:

Any changes made to under 18s concessions in London will ensure that any child eligible for free home to school travel under the Education Act 1996 will still receive this. The Department is carrying out an Equalities Impact Assessment which will help consider categories of children that should continue to receive free transport.

My officials are working with the Department for Education, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Transport for London and London Boroughs on the Equalities Impact Assessment which will be published in due course.

■ Rail Review

Matt Western: [\[82276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the outcome of the Williams Rail Review.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is committed to transforming our railways and building on Keith Williams' evidence-based priorities. We want to create a railway that puts passengers first, delivers better value for money and supports the nation's recovery from Covid-19.

Covid-19 struck when the Williams Rail Review was in its final stages. The priorities that Keith set out remain the right ones; we are working with him now to consider how best to deliver reform in light of these unique challenges.

■ Railways: Industrial Health and Safety**Jessica Morden:**[\[81693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce the risk of fatality for private contractors' staff on the UK railway network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is working closely with Network Rail, train operators, trade unions and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to reduce the risk of fatalities on the network to directly employed staff and contractors. It has been over a year since the tragic deaths of two track maintenance workers, Mr Gareth Delbridge and Mr Michael Lewis, on 3 July 2019, when a passenger train struck them at Margam East Junction on the South Wales Main Line, and I would like to once again express my condolences to their families for their losses.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) is currently investigating the circumstances that led to the tragic incident at Margam. Its report, which is expected shortly, is likely to make recommendations aimed at ensuring that lessons are learnt and at preventing such an event happening again.

Since July 2019, Network Rail has established a £70m safety task force to make fundamental changes to the way it manages track worker access to the rail network, including a review of its safe systems of work. Network Rail is also developing new digital protection and warning systems to warn track workers of approaching trains, and to increase the use of technology such as Plain Line Pattern Recognition, which provides automated track inspection and reduces the need for track access.

Jessica Morden:[\[81694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with train operating companies on ensuring their staff fatigue risk management systems meet relevant industry guidance and best practice.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department continues to work closely with train operating companies, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), and Network Rail to ensure that staff fatigue risk is managed properly in accordance with published guidance and best practice. Train operators are required by health and safety law to implement measures to manage fatigue amongst safety critical staff as part of their safety management systems. This

includes monitoring working hours, identifying the signs of fatigue, and managing factors that can have an impact of this on alertness and fitness for work. This applies to all staff on the railways, including track workers, train drivers and control room staff.

■ Regional Airports: Coronavirus

Catherine McKinnell: [\[81897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the financial situation of regional airports.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government recognises the challenges facing the aviation sector as a result of Covid-19, and has engaged with airports on an ongoing basis to understand the impacts on their operational and financial positions. It is vitally important that key sectors such as aviation are protected, and we are working closely with the sector to this end.

Airports have been able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures the Government has put in place to support businesses through the pandemic. This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals

However, if regional airports, or other businesses across the sector, still find themselves in severe and urgent financial difficulty as a result of Covid-19 then we remain open to discussions about bespoke financial support as a last resort. Any intervention would need to be on terms to protect the interests of taxpayers.

We will continue to work with airports to understand their positions and to consider any future requests for bespoke support.

■ Roads: Construction

Kerry McCarthy: [\[81627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of (a) the carbon impact of the Government's £27 billion road building programme and (b) the compatibility of that programme with the Government's target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Rachel Maclean:

The second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) provides £27.4 billion for the operation, maintenance, renewal and enhancement of the strategic road network. It is consistent with our ambitions to improve air quality and decarbonise transport, and the achievement of the overall net zero target.

Analysis carried out in the preparation of RIS2 showed that the additional effect of new RIS2 schemes will be around 0.27 megatonne CO₂ equivalent (MtCO₂e) through to the end of the fifth carbon budget in 2032. When compared to the UK's

fifth carbon budget of 1,725 MtCO_{2e}, these schemes represent an extremely small component.

■ **Taxis: Coronavirus**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese:

[\[82312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the financial support available to taxi drivers who have been affected financially by the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has acted to support those that are self-employed and have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak across all sectors of the economy. The overwhelming majority of taxi and private hire vehicle drivers are self-employed and can therefore apply for a grant through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Over the two rounds of the scheme a total of up to £14,250 has been made available to those eligible.

Taxi and PHV drivers may also be eligible for Universal Credit, from 6 April the standard allowance available under the Universal Credit system was increased from £317.82 to £409.89 a month. In addition, the Universal Credit calculation was amended, no longer using an assumed level of earnings (Minimum Income Floor) but actual earnings.

■ **Transport: Exhaust Emissions**

Gavin Robinson:

[\[81958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's survey, Transport decarbonisation plan: call for ideas, for what reasons Northern Ireland is omitted from that survey.

Rachel Maclean:

It was an error to not include Northern Ireland in the list of options in response to the question "What region do you live in?". I apologise for this error, which was not a purposeful omission. The question was part of the demographic information which was not a mandatory field and did not prevent responses to other questions being provided.

The online public feedback opportunity welcomed responses from across the United Kingdom, and was one of a number of ways people have fed into the development of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Department for Transport officials regularly engage with counterparts from the Northern Ireland Executive, who participated in recent workshops on decarbonising transport.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Alan Brown:**[\[82124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the data used to make assessments of the travel quarantine restrictions applicable to travel between foreign countries and the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government takes a range of factors into account when deciding which countries to add or remove from the Travel Corridor list. This includes:

- an estimate of the proportion of the population that is currently infectious in each country
- virus incidence rates and rates of change
- trends in incidence and deaths
- transmission status and international epidemic intelligence
- information on a country's testing capacity, testing regime and test positivity rate
- an assessment of the quality of the data available
- effectiveness of measures being deployed by a country
- volume of travel between the UK and that country

As this remains a relatively new virus, data about global infection rates and the trajectory of the disease are not always consistent or predictable between countries. That is why each destination is considered on an individual basis, and taken together, the different factors provide a risk assessment that allows Ministers to decide whether a country needs to be removed from the travel corridors list.

I refer the honourable member to the Secretary of State for Transport's Written Ministerial Statement on travel corridors made on 6 June 2020.

TREASURY**■ Airports: Coronavirus****Catherine McKinnell:**[\[81898\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing 12 months business rates relief to airports in England and Wales in response to covid-19 pandemic.

Jesse Norman:

Business rates policy is devolved. Decisions on rates in Wales are for the Welsh government. The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure.

A range of other measures to support all business, including airports, has also been made available, including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to help firms keep people in employment, and deferring Value Added Tax (VAT) payments. On 8 July the Chancellor set out a package of measures to support jobs across the UK, including a Job Retention Bonus to help firms keep furloughed workers and a new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people.

■ Airports: Non-domestic Rates

Jim McMahon:

[82233]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a list of rateable values for airports and ancillary uses in England.

Jesse Norman:

Rateable values (RVs) for all rateable non-domestic properties in England are published in the rating lists. The latest RVs can be found here:

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/business-rates-find>.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Jim McMahon:

[82230]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what conditions were included in financial support packages through the Birch scheme to airline operators.

Kemi Badenoch:

Any companies seeking support must have exhausted all other options before being considered, and any support given will be on terms that protect the taxpayer, with existing lenders and shareholders expected to contribute to and share in the financial burden. Companies seeking such support would need to agree to appropriate conditions – including those relating to tax, supplier payment terms, climate change and corporate governance.

■ Business: Coronavirus

Sir Alan Campbell:

[81576]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Government is planning to make further funding available to sectors that have remained closed due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has delivered one of the most generous and comprehensive packages of support globally, with a total fiscal response of close to £200bn. Many of the measures introduced including loan schemes, tax deferrals and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, remain open and have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

The Government recognises however that some sectors have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. After careful review of the evidence, the Government has acted to deliver targeted support to a number of sectors, such as arts, culture and heritage through a bespoke £1.57 billion package, and hospitality, leisure and retail through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and a reduction in VAT for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions.

We continue to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic, including on specific sectors, which will of course inform our efforts to support the recovery and back UK business going forward.

Owen Thompson:

[\[82143\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend eligibility criteria for business grants unallocated by local authorities to include business owners who have until now been ineligible for covid-19 related Government support.

Kemi Badenoch:

COVID-19 business support measures, including the business grant funds, are a fully devolved matter.

The business grant funds were intended to support small businesses which faced high fixed property-related costs during the strict 'lockdown' period, when consumer footfall was dramatically reduced. As most businesses are now able to reopen, it is right that we wind up these schemes, which in England closed to new applicants on 28 August. We have asked Local Authorities in England to return any unallocated funds to the Exchequer.

The Government continues to review the economic situation and consider what support businesses need. However, there are currently no plans to re-open the business grants to new applications or to extend the eligibility criteria.

■ Business: Exports

Ian Blackford:

[\[81992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has for the application and administration of VAT thresholds in relation to non-VAT registered UK businesses exporting to individual customers in the EU from January 2021.

Jesse Norman:

Following the end of the Transition Period, non-VAT registered businesses exporting to customers in the EU will not be subject to UK VAT rules but will be subject to any VAT rules in the country to which they are exporting. It would therefore be a matter for the country to which the goods are exported to set any such thresholds.

■ Construction: Red Diesel

Jonathan Edwards: [\[81787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on the construction industry of prohibiting the use of red diesel.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[81788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of prohibiting the use of diesel on construction companies with contracts running beyond April 2022.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[81789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of prohibiting the use of red diesel on the plant machinery sector.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[81790\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of whether exempting tier 3 and 4 engines from the ban on red diesel would promote industry to upgrade their machinery to low emission engines.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[81791\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the merits of creating a specific fund to support the construction industry in transitioning to (a) alternative cleaner machinery and (b) low carbon fuel sources.

Kemi Badenoch:

At Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced that the Government will remove the entitlement to use red diesel from April 2022, except in agriculture, fish farming, rail and for non-commercial heating (including domestic heating). This change will ensure that most businesses using diesel in the UK pay the standard fuel duty rate on diesel, which more fairly reflects the harmful impact of the emissions they produce.

These reforms are also designed to ensure that the tax system incentivises users of diesel to improve the energy efficiency of their vehicles and machinery, invest in cleaner alternatives or use less fuel. The Government has previously received feedback from developers of alternative fuels and technologies that they view the low cost of running a diesel engine with red diesel as a barrier to entry for greener alternatives.

The Government recognises that this will be a significant change for some businesses, including in the construction and plant machinery sector, and it is therefore taking steps to help manage the impact on those affected. Firstly, businesses will have until April 2022 to prepare before any changes take effect.

To support the development of alternative energy sources that businesses can switch to, the Government committed at Budget 2020 to at least doubling the size of the £500 million Energy Innovation Programme, accelerating the design and production of innovative clean energy technologies.

Finally, the Government launched a consultation in July to make sure it has not overlooked any exceptional reasons why other sectors should be allowed to continue to use red diesel beyond April 2022. As part of this, the Government is seeking information from affected users, including the construction and plant machinery sector, on the expected impact of these tax changes.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Mick Whitley:

[\[82424\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring employers who have furloughed employees through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme repay money to the Exchequer if they subsequently make redundancies.

Jesse Norman:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is designed to protect jobs, and it has protected 9 million jobs to date.

While employers who make redundancies do not need to repay the CJRS grant they have already received, if an employee is made redundant during the period of furlough then future grant payments in relation to that employee will cease.

Employees who are dismissed due to redundancy and who satisfy certain qualifying conditions are statutorily entitled to a lump sum redundancy payment from their employer, based on their age, length of service and contractual weekly earnings, subject to a statutory upper limit.

New legislation will ensure that employers base an employee's redundancy pay (and other statutory rights including notice pay and compensation for unfair dismissal) on their normal pay, rather than their furlough pay (potentially 80% of their normal wage). This will ensure that where someone who had previously been furloughed does lose their job, they will receive their full entitlements.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Events Industry

Gill Furniss:

[\[82236\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support furloughed workers in the events industry who may be unable to return to work after the furlough scheme ends in October 2020.

Jesse Norman:

The introduction of flexible furloughing helps firms to adjust how they furlough to match their speed of reopening, and firms will be able to claim under the CJRS until October flexibly. As economic activity develops, the Government must adjust its support to facilitate people's return to work while protecting both the UK economy and livelihoods. For businesses that may not be open after October, there is a range of continuing support including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme. For employees who may need more support, the Government has introduced temporary welfare measures including a £1,000 a year

increase to the Universal Credit (UC) standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1bn increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for UC and Housing Benefit claimants.

■ Credit Cards: Coronavirus

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[82216\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of credit card processing fees on small businesses and charities since the discouragement of cash payments during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he is taking to ensure businesses are not negatively affected by the increase in credit card payments.

John Glen:

The Government remains committed to helping businesses and workers through the present very difficult time, and has announced unprecedented support, including a range of grant and tax deferral schemes, and £300 billion of guarantees, equivalent to 15 per cent of UK GDP. For voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, the government has pledged £750 million to ensure they can continue their vital work supporting the country during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Government remains closely engaged with the financial regulators to monitor and assess risks around cash relating to COVID-19. In order to help control the virus, all businesses and individuals have been encouraged to follow the latest Government advice. To work safely during Coronavirus, retailers have been recommended to minimise contact around transactions, for example, considering using contactless payments. However, it remains the individual retailer's choice as to whether to accept or decline any form of payment, including cash or card.

Some acquirers (the financial services firms which enable retailers to process card payments) are taking voluntary measures to support their business customers, for example through waiving fees, and the Government welcomes such action.

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

■ Digital Technology: Taxation

Alison Thewliss:

[\[905357\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with his OECD counterparts on an international digital services tax.

Jesse Norman:

Developing a multilateral solution to the tax challenges arising from the digitisation of the economy is an important objective for the Government.

The UK continues to play a prominent and active role in OECD-led discussions, with a view to achieving that objective and ensuring a fairer and more sustainable corporation tax system in the future.

■ **Directors: Discretionary Grants**

Alec Shelbrooke:

[\[81820\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will use returned Discretionary Grant Funds unspent by local authorities to provide financial assistance to close companies directors who operate businesses from their homes, have had no access to business grants or local authority discretionary funds and have been unable to trade throughout the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

Local Authorities had significant discretion when it came to setting the eligibility criteria for their discretionary grant schemes. Although the Government encouraged Local Authorities to focus on small businesses which faced high fixed property-related costs and which had missed out on the main business grant schemes due to the way they interacted with the business rates system, Local Authorities were able to pay grants to other kinds of businesses, according to their assessment of local economic need. The business grant funds, including the Discretionary Grant Fund, were primarily intended to support small businesses which faced high fixed property-related costs during the strict 'lockdown' period, when consumer footfall was dramatically reduced. As most businesses are now able to reopen, it is right that we wind up the grant schemes, all of which closed to new applicants on 28 August. The Government continues to review the economic situation and consider what support businesses need. However, there are currently no plans to re-open the business grants to new applications.

We expect that Local Authorities will spend the vast majority of the funding which they were allocated for the Discretionary Grant Fund. We do expect there to be some underspends from the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. We have asked Local Authorities to return any underspends to the Exchequer.

■ **Eat Out to Help Out Scheme**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[81828\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish data by (a) parliamentary constituency and (b) local authority for (i) the number of premises registered for the Eat Out to Help Out scheme, (ii) the number of covers in respect of which claims have been made, (iii) the total amount so far claimed, and (iv) the total amount so far disbursed; and if he will publish that data on a fortnightly basis.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have published data about registered premises and claims received on GOV.UK on a weekly basis.

HMRC will be publishing constituency level data on claims received in due course. There are also plans to develop a wider official statistics release for the scheme once the claims service closes at the end of September.

Sarah Olney: [\[82248\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the businesses taking part in the Eat Out to Help Out scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Eat Out to Help Out (EOHO) scheme ran from 3 August to 31 August. During this period restaurants and other establishments registered for the EOHO scheme featured on a GOV.UK Restaurant Finder. The Finder allowed consumers to search for participating restaurants in a local area.

Details of restaurants, owned by businesses with 25 or fewer outlets, were also published as a CSV file on GOV.UK. That file is currently still available.

■ Eat Out to Help Out Scheme: Fraud

Theresa Villiers: [\[81638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to prevent fraud in the Eat Out to Help Out scheme.

Theresa Villiers: [\[81639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what precautions are in place to prevent fraudulent claims being made under the Eat Out to Help Out scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The vast majority of businesses operated the Eat Out to Help Out scheme correctly.

HMRC built checks into the system to help prevent fraud and protect public money.

HMRC carried out checks on businesses at the time of registration. HMRC are also checking claims and taking appropriate action to withhold payments found to be dishonest or inaccurate.

Businesses are also required to retain records to support their Eat Out to Help Out claims and provide them to HMRC if asked. They will also need to include the income from the discounted meals and reimbursed discounts in their tax returns. HMRC may undertake further compliance action when returns have been received.

■ Gift Aid

Janet Daby: [\[82364\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the net amount was of unclaimed eligible gift aid in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Kemi Badenoch:

In 2018 HMRC published research which estimated there was up to £564 million of Gift Aid that was not claimed on eligible donations. This is published on GOV.UK at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charitable-giving-and-gift-aid-research>

HMRC does not make annual estimates of unclaimed eligible gift aid as customers do not supply the necessary administrative information.

■ Horticulture: Excise Duties

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[81484\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the effect on carbon emissions of the heavy mineral oil excise duty reclamation scheme H049.

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[81485\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the (a) carbon emissions from and (b) cost to the tax payer of the H049 heavy oil excise duty reclamation scheme in each year since its introduction.

Kemi Badenoch:

The horticultural producers' relief scheme has carried a negligible cost to the Exchequer for the last six years, reflecting the very small amount of diesel used under this relief. HMRC publishes estimated costs of non-structural reliefs here: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/Pages/TaxAndDutybulletins.aspx>

The purpose of this relief is to support businesses in the horticulture sector with their fuel costs as horticulturists make a valuable contribution to the UK food supply.

■ Medicine: Research

Patrick Grady: [\[82055\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a response to the open letter of 20 July 2020 signed by 50 hon. Members calling for urgent action to protect research funded by UK medical research charities.

Kemi Badenoch:

Medical research charities are an integral part of the United Kingdom's world-leading life sciences sector and we welcome the interest of honourable members in this area. The government is monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the work of medical research charities. To this effect, the Department of Health and Social Care is closely liaising with the Association of Medical Research Charities, as well as individual charities, to understand the impact of the pandemic on this sector and identify how best the Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity funded research.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[81590\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the correspondence of 23 June, 21 July and 3 August 2020 from the hon. Member for East Londonderry, on extending maternity pay.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury has passed this correspondence to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who are responsible for this policy.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Hire Services**

Dr Ben Spencer:

[\[82489\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue accrued to the public purse from VAT on vehicle rentals in 2019-20; and what estimate he has made of the projected effect of covid-19 on that revenue in 2020-21.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs do not hold data on VAT collected specifically from the rental of vehicles, as information on supplies of specific commodities and services is not required on VAT returns.

HMRC record and publish annually details of VAT receipts across trade sectors and subsectors, but not of specific commodities or services. HMRC estimate and monitor the general impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on VAT receipts based on reference scenarios from the Office for Budget Responsibility, as well as the impact of Government policies related to COVID-19 such as VAT deferral and reduced VAT rates. Impacts on individual commodities or services are not available.

■ **Night-time Economy: Coronavirus**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[82411\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support his Department is providing (a) nightclubs and (b) other business operating in the night time economy that have paused trading for a prolonged period of time as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is aware of the intense disruption to businesses in the night time economy caused by the pandemic, and has sympathy with all those affected.

Businesses in this industry are currently able to benefit from the Government's unprecedented package of support:

- All retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses are benefitting from 100% business rates holiday for the entirety of the 2020-21 financial year, and if those businesses occupy a premise with a Rateable Value less than £51,000 they were also eligible for a cash grant from their local authority.

- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back Loan Scheme remain open and are ensuring that eligible businesses which are facing cash flow difficulties can access finance.
- The Job Retention Scheme will remain open for firms to use until the end of October.
- Finally, the Government has introduced a ban on evictions of commercial tenants for non-payment of rent, and has extended this until the end of September, and has published a Code of Practice to support best practice among landlords and tenants.

Government have implemented a cautious and phased approach to reopening the economy, guided at all times by medical and scientific experts. It is Government's objective to return to our way of life as soon as possible, and we are continuously reviewing our guidance, considering both the risks to public health and to the economy. However, nightclubs continue to present a risk to public health, and these venues should remain closed or be supported by their local authority to adapt, for example by temporarily repurposing their premises.

■ Pensions

Stephen Timms: [\[81494\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to increase the minimum age at which people can access their private pension under the tax rules; and if he will make a statement

John Glen:

In 2014 the government announced it would increase the minimum pension age to 57 from 2028, reflecting trends in longevity and encouraging individuals to remain in work, while also helping to ensure pension savings provide for later life.

That announcement set out the timetable for this change well in advance to enable people to make financial plans and will be legislated for in due course.

■ Public Houses: Coronavirus

Esther McVey: [\[81856\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government took to support the pub industry during the covid-19 lockdown; and what steps he is taking to support the pub industry as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Esther McVey: [\[81858\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to provide financial support to wet-led pubs as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Kemi Badenoch:

The pub industry 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
- 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.
- Protection for commercial leaseholders against automatic forfeiture for non-payment until September 30, 2020

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 to encourage people to return to eating out and to support the sector's recovery. This move will support up to 129,000 businesses, including the majority of pubs that serve food. 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.

■ Public Sector: Pay

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[81657\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the his Department's news story entitled, Pay rises for doctors, police and more in the public sector, published on 21 July 2020, for what reasons the fire service was not included in the list of public sector professions to receive a pay rise.

Steve Barclay:

The pay awards announced on 21 July 2020 are for workforces covered by Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) which are; the armed forces, teachers, police officers, the National Crime Agency, prison officers, doctors and dentists, the Judiciary, senior civil servants and senior military personnel.

Pay awards for firefighters are agreed independently of this process by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC) which includes representatives of employers, devolved administrations and unions.

■ Roadchef: Employee Benefit Trusts

Jessica Morden: [\[81699\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions his Department has had with HMRC on a resolution to the dispute between HMRC and the Roadchef Employee Benefits Trust; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The administration of the tax system is a matter for HM Revenue and Customs, who have indicated that they are in dialogue with the taxpayer. It is not appropriate for Treasury ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

■ Self-employed: Income

Alison Thewliss: [\[82052\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to Question 884 of the evidence given to the Treasury Committee on 15 July 2020, what the median figure is for the income of self-employed people.

Jesse Norman:

Information on the median income for the self-employed earning above £50,000 will be published in due course.

■ Social Enterprises: Tax Allowances

Alex Sobel: [\[82341\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he had made on continuing Social Investment Tax Relief beyond April 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[82342\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what representations he has received on extending Social Investment Tax relief to April 2023.

Jesse Norman:

The Government committed to review the Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) when it was expanded in 2017. As part of this review, the Government published a Call for Evidence in April 2019, which ran for 12 weeks.

HM Treasury has received a range of representations on SITR's design through the Call for Evidence, the wider review and engagement with interested parties. A response to the consultation will be published in due course and the Government will announce a decision on SITR's future at the Budget.

■ Sunscreens: VAT**Patrick Grady:**[\[82058\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of (a) the adequacy of the classification of sunscreen as a cosmetic product and (b) the potential merits of reducing the rate of VAT applied to sun protection products.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's approach is to support safety campaigns that place sunscreen within its proper context; as a precaution that people can take against the sun, but that does not provide 100 per cent protection. While sun protection products have a role to play in skin safety, it is important that people do not rely on sunscreen alone.

VAT raises a significant amount of revenue and plays an important part in funding the Government's public spending priorities. Any application of a reduced rate would have to be balanced against this. The Government keeps all taxes under constant review.

■ Travel and Tourism: Coronavirus**Greg Clark:**[\[81736\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to provide the travel industry with sector specific support to assist in its recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.

Kemi Badenoch:

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

In addition, and as part of its normal operations, the government has always considered providing support to strategically important companies that can reasonably be expected to have a long-term viable future, and whose failure or distress could cause disproportionate harm to the UK economy or society. Companies must have exhausted all other options before being considered, and any support given will be on terms that protect the taxpayer, with existing lenders and shareholders expected to contribute to and share in the financial burden. Any companies receiving support will need to agree to appropriate conditions – including those relating to tax, supplier payment terms, climate change and corporate governance.

■ Treasury: Publications**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[77576\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many civil servants in his Department worked on the (a) content and (b) distribution of his Department's internal newsletter entitled, No.11 in May 2020.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77577\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost in staff hours of work on his Department's internal newsletter entitled, No. 11 in May 2020.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[77578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the full list of recipients of his Department's internal newsletter entitled, No. 11 in May 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

This newsletter is a political publication, with no involvement from or costs incurred by Treasury departmental civil servants.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Stuart Anderson: [\[82405\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what opportunities the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities plans to make available to people in (a) Wolverhampton South West constituency and (b) the rest of the UK to engage with the work of the Commission.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which was established on 16 July of this year, has set out an ambitious plan of engagement and analysis to deliver against its terms of reference.

The Commission intends to engage with individuals and organisations nationwide in order to deliver its work, and has already held initial meetings with some of the key stakeholders, delivery partners and agencies for employment, education, health and criminal justice.

Its work will be crucial in informing and improving the national conversation on race and also demonstrates this government's mission to level up opportunity for everyone - whatever their background. Further updates on the Commission's progress will be posted on its website in due course.

■ Gay Conversion Therapy

Christine Jardine: [\[78827\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what the timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals to ban conversion therapy; when her Department plans to commence its study into the (a) locations and (b) prevalence of conversion therapy in the UK; and what the planned remit is of that study.

Kemi Badenoch:

This Government is committed to tackling the abhorrent practice of 'conversion therapy' in the UK.

The Government's 2017 National LGBT Survey provides some evidence of the prevalence of conversion therapy in the UK; it found that 2% of respondents had previously undergone conversion therapy and a further 5 % had been offered it. We have commissioned further research to inform policy development in this area. Following a competitive tendering exercise, in 2019 the Government Equalities Office commissioned Coventry University to undertake research which explores evidence of practices, experiences and effects of conversion therapy. Officials are currently reviewing the findings of this report prior to publication, and reviewing the efficacy of both legislative and non-legislative measures in ending these practices.

Once this work is complete, the Government will bring forward proposals to end conversion therapy in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Bereavement Benefits: Cohabitation**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[81891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the right for unmarried couples to claim bereavement benefits will extend to people who do not live together but do have a child.

Mims Davies:

Bereavement Support Payment is intended to help with the immediate costs of bereavement following the premature death of a spouse or civil partner. Whilst we intend to take forward a Remedial Order to extend this benefit to cohabitants with children, we have no plans to extend eligibility any further.

■ **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Medical Examinations**

Carol Monaghan:

[\[82088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to resume assessments for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit claims during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

Our priority throughout this health emergency continues to be to protect the public and staff, while ensuring people get the benefits they are entitled to quickly and safely. Reviews and reassessments remain suspended while we review what activity we can gradually start reintroducing in line with the latest public health advice. We will confirm next steps as soon as possible.

Carol Monaghan:

[\[82089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department are taking to ensure that no claimant for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit loses out due to delays in assessment due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

I can reassure you that IIDB is being treated with the same priority as other benefits and we are working closely with our stakeholders to restart assessments safely as soon as possible. Once face-to-face assessments are recommenced and cases progressed, awards will be backdated to the date of claim to ensure no one is underpaid. In the meantime, for claimants with the most serious or terminal conditions, claims continue to be processed and decisions made as normal. We are actively considering how to deal with those cases not currently being processed.

Reassessment case awards have been extended to ensure that payments continue unhindered on those cases. Any deteriorations in condition which would have meant an increase in award, will be backdated once face-to-face assessments recommence, to ensure that no one is underpaid.

■ Kickstart Scheme**Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[82595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's oral statement of 8 July 2020, Official Report, column 973, on Economic Update, when employers will be able to apply to employ a young person through the Kickstart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Kickstart scheme was opened to employers to apply on 2 September 2020.

Alex Davies-Jones:[\[82596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether new employers will be able to employ young people using the Kickstart scheme when that scheme is launched.

Mims Davies:

We welcome applications to set up Kickstart roles from employers from public, private and voluntary sectors, of all sizes and from both established and new enterprises. All employers applying to the scheme will be subject to checks to verify that they are legitimate organisations and can appropriately support any Kickstart participant taking a role with them.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Bristol**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[82062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July to Question 69599, what steps she is taking to bring the performance at the Bristol personal independence payment assessment centre back to the published service standard of 90% of claimants being examined within 30 minutes of their appointment time; and if she will make an estimate of when that standard will be achieved.

Justin Tomlinson:

All face-to-face assessments for sickness and disability benefits are currently suspended in line with public health advice. During the Covid-19 period we continue

to assess people based on written evidence alone, where that is possible, and have introduced telephone assessments. Telephony-based assessments do not fall within the same waiting time criteria. Once face-to-face assessment are reinstated we will work closely with suppliers to improve the waiting times whilst maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry:

[82099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has been made of the current clearance time frame for a personal independence payment claim compared to the three year average.

Justin Tomlinson:

The table below shows the median clearance time in weeks from registration to initial decision for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Normal Rules New Claims and Reassessments from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for all decisions made in April 2020 (the latest data available) and for the period May 2017 – April 2020 (the latest 3-year period for which data is available).

The median time from registration to initial decision for PIP Normal Rules claims for each month from April 2013 – April 2020 for New Claims and Reassessments from DLA is published and can be found in Table 2A of the published statistical tables linked below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904392/tables-pip-statistics-to-april-2020-revised-july-2020.xlsx

Table 1: Median Clearance Times in weeks for PIP New Claims and Reassessments from DLA for April 2020 and the 3-year period up to April 2020

	REASSESSMENT TYPE	
	New Claim	Reassessment
April 2020	16	27
May 2017 - April 2020	14	15

Notes

Source: PIP ADS

- PIP data includes normal rules claimants only and is for both new claims and DLA reassessment claims.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number of weeks.
- The status of claims as 'normal rules' and 'new claim/reassessment' is shown as at the point of clearance.

- The figures in the table are the median clearance time of claims which are cleared in the given time period.
- The median time is the middle value if you were to order all the times within the distribution from lowest value to highest value. The median is presented here instead of the mean because the mean can be unduly affected by outlying cases (e.g. cases where the person has been hard to reach due to being in prison, hospital, failed to attend the assessment on numerous occasions etc.)
- The 'Registration to DWP decision (end to end)' clearance time is measured as the median time between the date of registration of the claim and the date of the DWP decision to either award or disallow the claim. It does not include claims that were withdrawn by the claimant or claims that were disallowed by DWP pre-referral to the Assessment Providers (e.g. for failure to meet basic eligibility criteria or failure to return the Part 2 form within the time limit).
- Great Britain only.
- The median clearance time for May 2017 – April 2020 is unpublished data. It should be used with caution and it may be subject to future revision.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[82607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to permit personal independence payments assessment forms to be completed online during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are focused on transforming the PIP claimant journey overall to provide a more streamlined and user-friendly approach. We are committed to providing a digital channel - "PIP Apply" - to widen claimants' choices on how to make a new claim for PIP. Using the digital channel is optional and we will ensure we provide effective alternatives for those who are unable or prefer not to use our online services. We are aiming to provide this service by the end of the year.

■ Social Security Benefits

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[82063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will carry out a review into deaths of benefits claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department interacts with millions of people, and among them are some of the most vulnerable people in our society. There are many reasons why people pass away whilst claiming a DWP benefit and it would not be appropriate for the Department to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths of every individual. This is a consideration and decision for a Coroner.

As a department we want to do all we can to ensure people get the support they need. We are striving towards becoming a learning organisation, for example through the Serious Case Panel, which considers themes and systemic issues that come out of serious cases and makes recommendations for improvements.

Where the Department is made aware of a death and there is a suggestion or allegation that the Department's actions or omissions may have negatively contributed to the customer's circumstances an Internal Process Review will be conducted. Internal Process Reviews are not designed to identify or apportion blame, but to look at whether processes were followed correctly and what learning we can derive from this.

■ Statutory Sick Pay

Bridget Phillipson: [\[81829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the annual cost to businesses of paying statutory sick pay at its current rate of £95.85 a week.

Justin Tomlinson:

The estimated cost to employers of SSP is £1.5 billion a year. This is based on survey data from 2011. Data is not available on the total amount of SSP currently paid each year.

■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

Bridget Phillipson: [\[81830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's oral contribution, Official Report, 11 March 2020 col 280, what the evidential basis was for the Government's commitment to reimburse businesses with fewer than 250 employees for statutory sick pay costs in relation to employees being off work for covid-19-related reasons for up to a fortnight as potentially providing over £2 billion for up to two million businesses; and if she will place the modelling used to underpin that estimate in the Library.

Justin Tomlinson:

The government recognises that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) may need financial support where they incur additional costs of paying Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) due to increased absences relating to Covid-19. Under the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme, SMEs can reclaim up to two weeks of SSP per employee paid for sickness absences relating to Covid-19.

A range of costings were carried out in March 2020 based on the situation at the time. This was prior to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme being developed.

We will continue to revise costings based on outturn data from initial claims and the latest information about the Covid-19 outbreak.

■ Universal Credit: Children

Alex Davies-Jones:

[82593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit applications her Department has received from claimants citing that a third or subsequent child was conceived as a result of rape in each year since 2015; and how many of those applications were received in (a) each UK region and nation and (b) the Pontypridd constituency in each of those years.

Will Quince:

The policy to provide support for a maximum of two children was implemented in 2017. Statistics related to the policy, by nation, was published in July 2020 and can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-tax-credit-and-universal-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2020>

The table below provides data on the Number of Households Exempt from the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children due to Non-Consensual Conception, at April 2019 and April 2020.

APR-20	APR-19	
East Midlands	20	10
East of England	30	10
London	50	10
North East	10	10
North West	50	10
South East	40	10
South West	20	10
West Midlands	50	20
Yorkshire and The Humber	30	10
Scotland	30	10
Wales	20	0
TOTAL (GB)	360	90

Notes:

1. Regional information is only available for approximately 97% of data

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10
3. A number of households have exemptions in more than one category. They are counted once in each appropriate category and only once in the total

Due to Statistical disclosure controls data is not available for 2018 or at constituency level, to avoid the release of confidential data.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[82594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit applications her Department has (a) received from claimants citing that a third or subsequent child was conceived as a result of rape and (b) rejected as a result of a third or subsequent child being born after 5 April 2017.

Will Quince:

Statistics related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children was published in July 2020 and can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-tax-credit-and-universal-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2020>

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ Contingencies Fund Advance

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman): [\[HCWS436\]](#)

HM Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £900,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for HM Revenue and Customs. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £900,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £14,100,000,000 will be sought in the Supplementary Estimate for HM Revenue and Customs. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £14,100,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

In line with the latest OBR forecasts, further requests to the Contingencies Fund may be made as necessary to fund Covid-19 activity delivered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.