



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 07 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

#### ■ Boots: Government Assistance

**Nadia Whittome:**

[\[78941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what conditions were attached to any financial support provided to Boots.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government released an unprecedented package of support, including loan schemes, grant funding and wage packages, to help as many individuals and business as possible during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For commercial confidentiality reasons, the British Business Bank cannot disclose whether companies are or are not in receipt of support without their approval. Any financial support provided (if provided) would be subject to the terms and conditions of the specific scheme.

#### ■ Charity Research Support Fund

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[78660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75291 on Charities: Research, what recent assessment the Government has made of the (a) effectiveness of the contributions of the Charity Research Support Fund and (b) effect of the covid-19 outbreak on its level of funding.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Charity research funding is a vital component of the research funding landscape for universities, providing some 12% of total research income in 2018-19, and the charity research support element is a vital component in ensuring that universities are able to accept that funding. The charity research support element recognises that charities sponsor high-value research in universities, bringing benefits to scientific discovery and society, but that charities do not always meet the full costs of that research. According to data collected by the Office for Students using the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology research charities funded 59% of the full economic cost of the research they supported in UK universities. The charity research support element of block grant funding (£204 million in England, with equivalent sums in the rest of the UK) provides a further contribution of around 10% of the full economic cost.

A significant proportion of charity funding supports health research. The UK Health Research Analysis[1] concludes that charities provided £1.11 billion in funding for health research in 2018, 44% of the total. The impact and benefits of the medical research funded by charities and supported by UKRI's charity research support are

set out in the 2019 Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) report [Making a Difference](#)<sup>[2]</sup>, while the 2018 Wellcome Trust report [Empowering UK Universities](#) <sup>[3]</sup> uses cases studies to show the importance of QR funding, which includes charity research support.

Charities are anticipating a sizeable reduction in their income as a result of the pandemic, which will impact significantly on charity-funded research. The [AMRC reports](#) that its members project an average 41% decrease in their medical research spend over the next year, while 40 per cent of charities responding to its survey of members stated that half their clinical trials might be unable to restart. In April Cancer Research UK, one of the largest funders of charity research, announced a cut in research funding and stated that that no new research projects will be funded for at least the first six months of this financial year.

The size of the charity research support element does not depend upon the level of charity funding. Therefore, as the level of charity research funding falls, the charity research support element of block grant funding will cover a greater proportion of the full economic cost of charity-funded research at universities.

[1] <https://hrcsonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UK-Health-Research-Analysis-2018-for-web-v1-28Jan2020.pdf>

[2] <https://www.amrc.org.uk/making-a-difference-impact-report-2019>

[3] <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/empowering-uk-universities-how-strategic-institutional-support-helps-research-thrive.pdf>

## ■ Charity Research Support Fund: Coronavirus

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[84240]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of funding for the Charity Research Support Fund in 2021.

**Amanda Solloway:**

We are aware of the impact of Covid-19 on the university research sector and charity research organisations. On 27 June we announced a support package that will help protect science jobs and enable universities to continue research and innovation activities including those funded by charities.

From the Autumn, the Government will provide a package consisting of low-interest loans with long pay-back periods, supplemented by a small amount of government grants, to cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020/21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity, including from charities. Universities will be asked to demonstrate how these funds are being utilised to sustain research in areas typically funded by charities and business, for example to protect areas of medical research that have been developed in part with support of charities.

We continue to engage with the sector on ensuring the long-term sustainability of charity funded research in universities. As part of this BEIS and DHSC officials are also meeting regularly with the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and with individual medical research charities.

## ■ **Conditions of Employment: Re-employment**

**Alex Sobel:**

[\[83925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent businesses from firing and rehiring employees to circumvent re-negotiation on staff contracts.

**Paul Scully:**

Terms and conditions of employment are for negotiation and agreement between employers and employees (or their representatives). Provided they do not discriminate unlawfully, for example on grounds of race, sex or disability, employers are free to offer the terms and conditions of employment which best suit their business needs.

However, we expect all employers, to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Contract terms cannot lawfully be changed by the employer without prior agreement from the employee (either individually or through a recognised trade union). Depending on the extent and likely impact of the proposed changes, employers should meet with affected employees, or the union where one is recognised, and explain their case for making the proposed change.

## ■ **Copyright**

**Tracy Brabin:**

[\[84319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Minister for the Cabinet Office on the future of UK's copyright exhaustion regime at the end of the transition period; and what representations he has received from the creative industries on the matter.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The Intellectual Property Office is working with departments across Government, including the Cabinet Office on the future of the IP exhaustion regime at the end of the transition period. Officials have engaged with a wide cross section of creative industries in consideration of this matter. Any change to the future exhaustion regime will be subject to consultation.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Greater London**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[77724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the economic effect of the covid-19 outbreak on London's economy in the (a) retail, (b) culture and (c) hospitality sectors.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government recognises that these are challenging times for London businesses within the retail, culture, and hospitality sectors.

Hospitality, culture, retail, leisure, and tourism employ 1 in 5 Londoners and generate £62bn in GVA. On a normal working day roughly 2 million Londoners use the tube to travel to work. The loss of a large proportion of this daily office foot traffic represents a major challenge to the capital's hospitality and retail businesses, especially in Central London where the residential population is low such as Westminster and the West End.

Businesses in the hospitality sector across the economy are being supported through a range of measures including Local Authority Discretionary Grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Eat Out to Help Out and the reduced VAT rate to 5%, along with Coronavirus Business Interruption loans.

Take-up of these schemes across the UK have been high. The accommodation and food services sector has seen 73% take-up rate in terms of employments, with over £4.1 billion claimed through CJRS. With 87% of employers in this sector furloughing at least one employment. The sector has been offered 3,924 CBILS facilities worth £956m, and 88,427 BBLs loans worth £3.10bn.

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

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[77764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the announcement that the Government has secured access to 90 million doses of promising coronavirus vaccine candidates, published on 20 July 2020 on gov.uk, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that that access does not affect the availability of global vaccine stocks available for vulnerable groups in lower income countries.

**Amanda Solloway:**

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

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

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

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

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Property Development**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[83825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have had with commercial property companies since 1 March 2020.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on GOV.UK. Details for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

The latest published data covers January to March 2020. Data for April to June 2020 will be published in due course.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Staff**

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[77517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when staff of his Department will be required to return to their workplace as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Since 23 March 2020, the Department has applied the Government's Safer Working Guidance (for England, Scotland and Wales) to ensure the safety of our staff.

In line with the Government's latest guidance from 1 August 2020, we are gradually increasing the number of staff working in the office whilst also continuing to enable working from home. This follows a programme of ongoing activity across all our sites to complete COVID-19 Risk Assessments, prepare our buildings, and consult with staff.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in response to complaints made to date to his Department in relation to misselling of Green Deal loans by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS), what the (a) highest, (b) lowest and (c) average loan reductions offered to those complainants were as a proportion of the overall loan amount.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The figures provided below are as of 7 September, except where otherwise specified.

A total of 218 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. At the end of June 2020 (the latest date for which this data is available), the total value of loans, including interest and fees, that are the subject of the appeals was £1,700,338 .

The Green Deal Framework Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction (an initial notice, referred to as an Intention Notice) and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final.

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The total value of proposed reductions set out in Intention Notices and final Sanction Notices relating to mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by HELMS to date is £376,628.

Where Intention Notices have proposed reductions in loan amounts, the highest reduction to date has been 68%, the lowest reduction, 30%, and the average reduction, 50%.

Six Intention Notices in respect of mis-selling by HELMS have proposed cancellation. To date, there have been 4 cases where Intention Notices proposed cancellation but the Secretary of State's decision, set out in the subsequent final Sanction Notices, was to impose reduction following representations.

No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**■ Global Challenges Research Fund: Coronavirus****Chi Onwurah:****[78662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Foreign Secretary and (b) Chancellor of the Exchequer on the effect of covid-19 on the budget for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

**Amanda Solloway:**

As with all Government Departments, BEIS has had to adjust our allocation of ODA funding in response to the predicted fall in Gross National Income during 2020. The impacts of this adjustment on the Global Challenges Research Fund were discussed with both HM Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during the process of agreeing the overall savings.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[78663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to support Global Challenges Research Fund funding projects which have had to halt research projects due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Amanda Solloway:**

BEIS is working closely with our Global Challenges Research Fund delivery partners to ensure the impacts of Covid-19 are minimised as far as possible. In some cases this will result in extensions to grants enabling valuable research which has been delayed due to the pandemic to be completed.

**Green Deal Scheme: Complaints****Anne McLaughlin:**[\[R\] \[78726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what time targets his Department has for acknowledging complaints from people about Green Deal mis-selling.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

In line with departmental targets, we aim to respond to correspondence within 15 working days. This includes acknowledging complaints about Green Deal mis-selling.

**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[R\] \[78727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average response time is from the Green Deal Ombudsman on a complaint about Green Deal mis-selling once an acknowledgement has been received.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

Where mis-selling complaints have not been dealt with to the consumer's satisfaction by the Green Deal Provider, they are routinely handled by the Financial Ombudsman Service. We do not hold data on response times for either the Green Deal Ombudsman or the Financial Ombudsman Service.

**Green Deal Scheme: Misrepresentation****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[77662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new complaints, by parliamentary constituency, his Department received on the mis-selling of Green Deal loans by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd in each month since 1 January 2020.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The following table lists the numbers of appeals made, by month and constituency, to the Secretary of State under the Green Deal Framework Regulations regarding mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd.

**JANUARY 2020**


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| <b>Constituency</b>            | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Thornbury and Yate             | 1                       |
| Colchester                     | 1                       |
| Inverclyde                     | 1                       |
| Paisley and Renfrewshire North | 1                       |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun         | 2                       |

**FEBRUARY 2020**


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| <b>Constituency</b>                         | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Rutherglen and Hamilton West                | 1                       |
| East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow    | 1                       |
| Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East | 1                       |
| Glasgow North East                          | 1                       |
| West Dunbartonshire                         | 2                       |
| Torfaen                                     | 2                       |

**MARCH 2020**


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| <b>Constituency</b>            | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rutherglen and Hamilton West   | 1                       |
| Central Ayrshire               | 1                       |
| Paisley and Renfrewshire North | 1                       |
| Perth and North Perthshire     | 1                       |
| Clacton                        | 1                       |
| Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath      | 1                       |

**MARCH 2020**

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|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Livingston | 1 |
|------------|---|

**APRIL 2020**

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| <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Central Ayrshire | 1 |
|------------------|---|

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Glasgow East | 1 |
|--------------|---|

**MAY 2020**

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| <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Paisley and Renfrewshire North | 1 |
|--------------------------------|---|

**JUNE 2020**

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| <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Ipswich | 1 |
|---------|---|

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Rutherglen and Hamilton West | 1 |
|------------------------------|---|

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Paisley and Renfrewshire South | 1 |
|--------------------------------|---|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow | 1 |
|--|---|

**JULY 2020**

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| <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Paisley and Renfrewshire North | 2 |
|--------------------------------|---|

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Central Ayrshire | 1 |
|------------------|---|

**August 2020**

| <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Appeals received</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Motherwell and Wishaw | 1 |
|-----------------------|---|

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 1 |
|---------------------------|---|

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Jarrow | 1 |
|--------|---|

**JULY 2020**


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|   |   |
|---|---|
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun                      | 1 |
| Newport East                                | 1 |
| Gloucester                                  | 1 |
| Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East | 1 |
| East Dunbartonshire                         | 1 |
| Rutherglen and Hamilton West                | 1 |
| North Ayrshire and Arran                    | 1 |

**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[77663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints his Department has received relating to the Green Deal scheme in each of the last 12 months that do not reference the practices of Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The following table lists the numbers of appeals made, in each of the last 12 complete months, to the Secretary of State under the Green Deal Framework Regulations, regarding complaints not relating to the practices of Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd.

| <b>MONTH</b>   | <b>APPEALS RECEIVED</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| September 2019 | 4                       |
| October 2019   | 3                       |
| November 2019  | 19                      |
| December 2019  | 1                       |
| January 2020   | 2                       |
| February 2020  | 8                       |
| March 2020     | 4                       |
| April 2020     | 0                       |
| May 2020       | 1                       |
| June 2020      | 2                       |
| July 2020      | 9                       |

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| MONTH       | APPEALS RECEIVED |
|-------------|------------------|
| August 2020 | 4                |

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**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[77664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many complaints on the mis-selling of Green Deal loans by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd his Department has received since that scheme was established; and how many of those complainants have yet to receive (a) an initial and (b) final intention notice in response to their complaint.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The figures provided below are as of 7 September, except where otherwise specified.

A total of 218 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. At the end of June 2020 (the latest date for which this data is available), the total value of loans, including interest and fees, that are the subject of the appeals was £1,700,338 .

The Green Deal Framework Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction (an initial notice, referred to as an Intention Notice) and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final.

Complainants are not required to indicate acceptance or otherwise in response to Intention Notices or final Sanction Notices. Affected parties, including complainants, may make representations in response to Intention Notices and can appeal final decisions (set out in final Sanction Notices) to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal.

One hundred and twenty-one HELMS complainants have yet to receive an Intention Notice. One hundred and seventy-four HELMS complainants have yet to receive a final decision.

Ninety-one Intention Notices in respect of mis-selling by HELMS proposed a reduction in loan amount. Of these, complainants have made representations in 37 cases. As complainants are not required to indicate acceptance of a proposed reduction the Department does not hold such records.

The total value of proposed reductions set out in Intention Notices and final Sanction Notices relating to mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by HELMS to date is £376,628.

Where Intention Notices have proposed reductions in loan amounts, the highest reduction to date has been 68%, the lowest reduction, 30%, and the average reduction, 50%.

Six Intention Notices in respect of mis-selling by HELMS have proposed cancellation. To date, there have been 4 cases where Intention Notices proposed cancellation but

the Secretary of State's decision, set out in the subsequent final Sanction Notices, was to impose reduction following representations.

No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many initial intention notices proposing cancellation of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd have been accepted by individual complainants.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The figures provided below are as of 7 September, except where otherwise specified.

A total of 218 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. At the end of June 2020 (the latest date for which this data is available), the total value of loans, including interest and fees, that are the subject of the appeals was £1,700,338 .

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Six Intention Notices in respect of mis-selling by HELMS have proposed cancellation. To date, there have been 4 cases where Intention Notices proposed cancellation but the Secretary of State's decision, set out in the subsequent final Sanction Notices, was to impose reduction following representations.

No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many initial intention notices proposing reduction of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd have been accepted by individual complainants.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The figures provided below are as at 7 September, except where otherwise specified.

A total of 218 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to the Secretary of State. At the [end of June 2020] (the latest date for which this data is available), the total value of loans, including interest and fees, that are the subject of the appeals was £1,700,338 .

The Green Deal Framework Regulations require that, before imposing any sanction, the Secretary of State gives notice to affected parties of his intention to impose a sanction (an initial notice, referred to as an Intention Notice) and provides them with an opportunity to make representations before it is made final.

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Six Intention Notices in respect of mis-selling by HELMS have proposed cancellation. To date, there have been 4 cases where Intention Notices proposed cancellation but the Secretary of State's decision, set out in the subsequent final Sanction Notices, was to impose reduction following representations.

No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many initial intention notices proposing reduction of a Green Deal loan mis-sold by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd have been challenged by complainants through additional representations.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

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No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total value is of Green Deal loans of those consumers who have complained to his Department in relation to mis-selling by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

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No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the value is of reduction offers made to consumers who have complained to his Department in relation to mis-selling by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) to date.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

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No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

**Margaret Ferrier:**

[\[77670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many initial intention notices issued by his Department in response to complaints of the mis-selling of Green Deal loans by Home Energy and Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) first proposed (a) cancellation of the Green Deal loan, (b) reduction of that loan or (c) cancellation of that loan but then changed to a proposal of reduction.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

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A total of 218 appeals about the mis-selling of Green Deal Plans by the company Home Energy & Lifestyle Management Ltd (HELMS) have been referred to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. At the end of June 2020 (the latest date for which this data is available), the total value of loans, including interest and fees, that are the subject of the appeals was £1,700,338 .

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No complainants who have received Intention Notices proposing cancellation have made representations in response to those Notices.

## ■ Horizon 2020

**Helen Hayes:** [\[77718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has for the UK's future association with the Horizon Europe programme.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The UK is open to associate to Horizon Europe, if a fair and balanced deal can be agreed. We will make a final decision once it is clear whether such terms can be reached. Any agreements relating to Union programmes should contain fair terms for UK participation. This should include fair treatment of participants, a fair and appropriate financial contribution, provisions allowing for sound financial management by both parties, and appropriate governance and consultation.

As a responsible government, we are also developing alternative schemes to support international research and innovation collaboration. If we do not formally associate to Horizon Europe we will implement ambitious alternatives as quickly as possible from January 2021 and address the funding gap.

## ■ Horizon Europe

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[78661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the 22 July 2020 Wellcome Trust proposals on aspects of UK participation in Horizon Europe.

**Amanda Solloway:**

The UK is open to associate to Horizon Europe, if a fair and balanced deal can be agreed. We will make a final decision once it is clear whether such terms can be reached. Any agreements relating to EU programmes should contain fair terms for UK participation.

BEIS regularly meets with stakeholders, including Wellcome, to hear their views on a wide range of research and innovation issues such as participation in Horizon Europe. These views are considered as part of the policy making process.

## ■ Hydrogen: Europe

**Virginia Crosbie:** [\[77861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to provide support for the UK hydrogen sector which is equivalent to EU support for that sector in mainland Europe.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier. We are currently developing our strategic approach to hydrogen and its potential to deliver against our net zero goals.

We are investing up to £121m (between 2015 and 2021) in hydrogen innovation across the value chain. We are developing new policy, in partnership with industry, to bring forward the technologies and supply chain we will need to grow the UK hydrogen economy. This includes business models to support the deployment of, and investment in, low carbon hydrogen production, and a £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund to stimulate capital investment.

We are closely monitoring international hydrogen developments and participate in a range of international fora, including the International Partnership for Hydrogen for Fuel Cells in the Economy, Mission Innovation and Clean Energy Ministerial where we engage with partners including the EU. This is informing our own strategic approach to the development of hydrogen in the UK context, including the role of Government in ensuring that the UK can harness opportunities for partnership and economic benefit.

## ■ Imports: China

**Anthony Mangnall:**

[\[77814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the reliance on China for (a) pharmaceuticals, (b) microchips and (c) cobalt batteries.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government is working hard to ensure we have resilient and diverse supply chains in place to ensure the continued flow of essential goods for UK consumers. This includes looking at our trading relationships with a range of international partners, as well as considering domestic initiatives to promote our economic recovery.

The Government committed £146 million through the first Life Sciences Sector Deal to grow medicines manufacturing in the UK. We have established the Medicines Manufacturing Industry Partnership with industry to ensure that the UK is recognised as a world-class advanced centre for medicines manufacturing.

The Government has also committed £274 million to the Faraday Battery Challenge to support the research, development, and scale-up of world-leading battery technology in the UK. The Faraday Battery Challenge is funding research to reduce our dependency on raw mineral supply and make better use of global resources such as cobalt.

## ■ Life Sciences: Research

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[77720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to the life sciences sector to help ensure that life sciences research does not suffer long-term damage as a result of the covid-19 lockdown.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Government's long-term objectives for research and development (R&D) are clear: to be a science superpower and invest in the science and research that will deliver economic growth and societal benefits across the UK for decades to come, and to build the foundations for the new industries of tomorrow. This was supported by the unprecedented commitment at the Budget to increase public investment in R&D to £22 billion by 2024/25.

In June, the Government announced a support package to sustain research capacity and capability, including life sciences research, which might otherwise be impacted by COVID-19. From this autumn, UK universities will be able to access a Government funded package of long-term, low interest loans, supplemented by a small amount of grant, covering up to 80% of the university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020/21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity. This will help to protect research jobs, capability, and ground-breaking research.

**■ Manufacturing Industries: West Midlands****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[77745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on manufacturers in the West Midlands of not (a) updating and (b) renewing guidance on CE markings after the end of the transition period.

**Paul Scully:**

I appreciate that industry is looking for guidance as soon as possible. Guidance is under development and will be published shortly. However, I can confirm that the UKCA marking will come into existence on 1 January 2021.

The forthcoming guidance will address the question of CE marked goods in the UK after the transition period, however I can say now that under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement goods that were placed on the market before the transition periods ends can continue to circulate between the EU and the UK, including those which are CE marked.

**■ Marriage: Coronavirus****Tracy Brabin:**[\[84320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support he is providing for (a) companies and (b) people working in the wedding industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

As part of wider support for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, wedding companies have been able to access a range of government-backed loans and grants. Employers have been able to use the Job Retention Scheme to furlough staff until 31 October. There are a number of self-employed people working in the wedding

industry, and they have been able to benefit from the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

## ■ OneWeb

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[83798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2020 to Question 74577 on OneWeb, if the Government will publish the advice referred to in that Answer that it received prior to making the decision to purchase OneWeb.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Due to commercial concerns, the Government will not be able to publish the advice used by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State in making the decision to purchase OneWeb.

## ■ OneWeb: Satellites

**Chi Onwurah:** [\[78657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July to Question 66860, what discussions his Department has had with Airbus on its plans to continue to manufacture OneWeb satellites at its Florida plant; and whether he is taking steps to encourage the transfer of OneWeb manufacturing jobs to the UK.

**Amanda Solloway:**

There have been discussions with Airbus, but these are of a commercially sensitive nature.

The agreement we have secured with Bharti secures 70 existing UK jobs in OneWeb, and we will be using our position to encourage expansion of its supply chain in the UK.

## ■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

**Scott Benton:** [\[78889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing a compulsory registration scheme for hairdressers, operating from both salons and people's homes, to ensure that customers can have confidence during the covid-19 outbreak that they are operating responsibly and in accordance with the law.

**Paul Scully:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer provided to the petition P002432, "The regulation of the Hair, Barber and Beauty industries", 20 May 2019, [Official Report, Volume 660](#).

We have published comprehensive guidance for people who provide close contact services, including hairdressers and barbers to ensure they are COVID-secure:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/close-contact-services>.

#### ■ Personal Care Services: Females

**Nadia Whittome:** **[84374]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of the covid-19 lockdown restrictions on (a) businesses, (b) self-employed people and (c) people employed in the beauty industry; and what assessment he has made of whether there has been a disproportionate effect on women of the effect on that industry.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government has considered the financial impact of COVID-19 on all parts of the economy throughout the pandemic and has provided unprecedented levels of financial support.

The Government will continue to monitor the impact of the restrictions, working closely with business groups including the beauty industry, to ensure it continues to consider the impact on all groups including women.

#### ■ Personal Care Services: Regulation

**Scott Benton:** **[78890]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of additional regulation in the hairdressing industry to allow only those with formal qualifications in the industry to operate both from salons and in people's homes.

**Paul Scully:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer provided to the petition P002432, "The regulation of the Hair, Barber and Beauty industries", 20 May 2019, [Official Report, Volume 660](#).

#### ■ Post Office: Annual Reports

**Marion Fellows:** **[77690]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the Post Office Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 to be laid before Parliament.

**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. The timeframe for the Post Office Report and Accounts is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. I therefore asked Nick Read, the Group Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon. Member on this matter. His reply was issued on 26<sup>th</sup> August and a copy will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

## ■ Research: Cardiovascular System

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[77676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) research into heart and circulatory diseases and (b) UK research and development of the Association of Medical Research Charities' estimated £310 million decrease in charity-funded medical research as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Ministers in BEIS and officials have met regularly with the Association of Medical Research Charities and their members over the last months to discuss how charity-funded research can best be supported through the Government's University Research Stabilisation Package.

Universities will be asked to demonstrate how these funds are being utilised to sustain research in areas typically funded by charities and business, for example to protect areas of medical research that have been developed in part with support of charities. We continue to engage with the sector as the details of the package are developed further.

## ■ Research: Coronavirus

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[77717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support research into the long-term health consequences of covid-19.

**Amanda Solloway:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave the Hon. Member for Newport West on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to Question [71882](#).

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[77719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to support research into the correlation between age and susceptibility to covid-19.

**Amanda Solloway:**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), through the Medical Research Council, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, has provided £4.9m funding to the ISARIC consortium for research and provision of real time information into the factors, including age, that put people most at risk of developing severe hospitalised illness as a result of Covid-19. They have also provided £1m to OpenSAFELY, a secure platform linking the primary care NHS records of 24 million patients, which is able to identify patients at higher risk of admission, ventilation and death from Covid-19.

More widely, as of 13 August, UKRI has committed more than £95m to new research aimed at tackling COVID-19. This includes projects supported by the UKRI call

launched in March 2020 for short-term projects (up to 18 months) addressing the health, social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak. This call includes new research with a clear impact pathway that has the potential (within the period of the award) to deliver a significant contribution to the understanding of, and response to, the Covid-19 pandemic. UKRI has also repurposed research grants with a total value of around £80m to address the effects of the pandemic.

### ■ **Research: Government Assistance**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[77677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to consult medical research charities during the development of the Government's comprehensive R&D plan.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Ministers in BEIS and officials have met regularly with the Association of Medical Research Charities and their members over the last months to discuss how charity-funded research can best be supported and we have sought their input on the Government's R&D Roadmap.

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[77678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for (a) Health and Social Care and (b) Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the suitability of existing Government support packages for medical research charities in light of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Amanda Solloway:**

Ministers and officials in BEIS have maintained regular contact with other departments throughout the pandemic, including DHSC and DCMS, as we develop our response. BEIS and the Department of Health and Social Care have been 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 Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity funded research.

This is in addition to the £750 million package announced by DCMS to ensure Voluntary, Community and social Enterprises can continue their vital work supporting the country during the coronavirus outbreak.

### ■ **Retail Trade: Coronavirus**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[78712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to (a) support retailers that have sought to close stores during the covid-19 outbreak in (i) East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow constituency and (ii) other areas of the UK and (b) enable anchor stores to remain open.

**Paul Scully:**

The UK Government has provided unprecedented support to retail businesses across the UK, with generous income support schemes, loans and grants, and tax deferrals. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has been instrumental in protecting jobs, including 779,500 Scottish employments furloughed.

Additionally, we have extended the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme to businesses in deep debt, which will allow small and independent retailers that are not insolvent to access the scheme.

The Scottish Government has put a comprehensive package of measures worth £2.3 billion to help sustain Scottish businesses, including 100% rates relief for properties in the retail, hospitality, leisure and airport sectors, and a local authority-delivered Business Support Fund worth over £1 billion, which includes Small Business Grants to the ratepayers of properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

Public health is a devolved matter and therefore business closures may differ between devolved nations. Details of business restrictions and closures are set out in The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020.

**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[84262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to financially support clothing retailers experiencing reduced footfall during the recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government recognise that the recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak is not uniform across the retail sector.

The Government has provided an unprecedented package of measures including grants, loans, and relief worth more than £300 billion. Retailers are benefitting from the removal of business rates for 12 months and have been able to access grants through the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure Grant Fund.

Retailers have also been able to benefit from The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

**■ Retail Trade: Home Shopping****Carla Lockhart:**[\[77860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a scheme to provide financial support to small independent retailers to increase their online sales platform to help tackle a drop in footfall as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government is committed to supporting the UK's small independent retailers make better use of technology and trading online, expanding their customer base from the local high street to a national and international marketplace.

Retailers are able to access an unprecedented package of support including the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme and Bounce Back Loans Scheme. Additionally, businesses in Northern Ireland can access <https://www.enterpriseni.com/> for further support.

The Start Up Loans Company, a subsidiary of the British Business Bank, delivers the Government's Start Up Loans programme providing finance and support for businesses who struggle to access other forms of finance.

Tech Nation, which receives grant funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, provides a range of resources to support the growth of digital businesses in the UK. This includes a Digital Business Academy that provides free online courses on starting and growing a digital business.

**■ Small Business Grants Fund****Anne Marie Morris:****[84263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has published updated guidance for local authorities on their ability to pay out business support grant funds to businesses whose rateable value was amended after the 11 March 2020.

**Paul Scully:**

The grant schemes applied to businesses who were trading, occupying premises and liable for business rates on 11 March 2020. This was the first date that the Small Business Grants Fund was announced at Budget. This was to avoid businesses being established for the sole purpose of applying for grants.

In cases where it was factually clear to the Local Authority on 11 March 2020 that the rating list was inaccurate on that date, Local Authorities had the discretion to withhold or award the grant based on eligibility had the list been accurate. This discretion was only intended to prevent clear errors.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to Local Authorities setting a closure date of Friday 28 August. We asked Local Authorities to close all schemes by this point and ensure that, where payments are still in process, they are complete by 30 September at the very latest.

Businesses which are not eligible for or have not received grant funding should be able to benefit from other measures in the Government's unprecedented package of support for business. For further information please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

## ■ Vaccination: Manufacturing Industries

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[77614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, where vaccine doses purchased in the agreements with (a) BioNTech and (b) Pfizer will be manufactured.

**Amanda Solloway:**

BioNTech and Pfizer have come together to develop a vaccine based on BioNTech's proprietary mRNA technology and supported by Pfizer's global vaccine development and manufacturing capabilities. A deal to supply 30m doses to the UK was announced 20 July 2020. As commercial negotiations are still ongoing around the vaccine agreements at this time, the Government is not able to confirm manufacturing and supply arrangements at present.

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[77615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many UK-based jobs will be created in the vaccine manufacturing supply chain in response to covid-19.

**Amanda Solloway:**

No such assessment has been made, however this Government has already taken action to scale up UK vaccine manufacturing capabilities, so that if and when a vaccine is found, it can be manufactured and made available to the public as quickly as possible. This includes funding to accelerate and expand the new Vaccine Manufacturing & Innovation Centre, bring online a Rapid Deployment Facility and a new state-of-the-art centre to scale up COVID-19 vaccine and gene therapy manufacturing.

## ■ Vehicles: Fuels

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[84152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the average (a) wholesale and (b) retail margin of profit on sales of vehicle fuels since the covid-19 outbreak; what steps he is taking to ensure that the price paid for vehicle fuels is not kept artificially high; and if he will make a statement.

**Kwasi Kwarteng:**

The Government monitors the national average retail prices of fuels. These are published at: [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/oil-and-petroleum-products-weekly-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/oil-and-petroleum-products-weekly-statistics).

BEIS analysis shows that changes in the global price of crude oil is the primary driver of movements in the national average retail prices of fuels such as petrol and diesel. Other factors include currency exchange rates and the balance of supply and demand for these fuels in the wholesale petroleum products markets. Changes in the price of crude oil feed through to retail prices over the course of about 6 weeks. Since March, retail prices have broadly moved in line with movements in crude oil and

wholesale product prices – falling initially as crude oil prices fell and then rising as oil prices recovered through June and July.

The UK has some of the lowest pre-tax prices in Europe for both petrol and diesel, and our evidence suggests that the UK road fuels sector as a whole is competitive and ensures that consumers get a fair deal.

The Government believe that a competitive market is the best way to keep prices low. Retail fuel markets are subject to UK competition law under the Competition and Markets Authority.

### ■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[83865\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of whether non-covid deaths in care homes at the peak of the outbreak were accurately recorded.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the UKSA [PQ83865.pdf]

### ■ Care Homes: Lancashire

**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[81546\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died in care homes in (a) April, (b) May and (c) June 2020 in (i) Preston and (ii) Lancashire compared to the same period in each of the last two years.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the UKSA [PQ81546.pdf]

### ■ Coronavirus: Death

**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[81567\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, the exact number of daily excess all-cause mortality in (a) age group and (b) PHE centres in week 30 of covid-19.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the UKSA [PQ81567.pdf]

**Rachael Maskell:**[\[83875\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of (a) trends in the level of non-covid-19 deaths during the peak of the outbreak and (b) the level of those deaths which resulted directly from that outbreak.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the UKSA [PQ83875.pdf]

**■ Coronavirus: Preston****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[81566\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) median age (b) sex (c) race (d) religion and (e) gender was of covid-19 (i) deaths and (ii) cases in Preston constituency.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. Letter from the UKSA [PQ81566.pdf]

**■ Elections: Proof of Identity****Cat Smith:**[\[82068\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent voter identification pilot schemes on BAME communities.

**Chloe Smith:**

This Government is determined to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system and give the public confidence that our elections are secure and fit for the 21st century. To that end we are committed to introducing identification to vote at polling stations in Great Britain. In Northern Ireland, voters are already required to produce photographic identification.

The voter ID pilots were a success and the overwhelming majority of electors cast their vote without a problem. There was no indication that any consistent demographic was adversely affected by the use of voter ID.

We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, including charities and civil society organisations, to make sure that voter ID works for all voters. For any voter who does not have one of the required forms of photographic ID, a local elector ID will be available, free of charge, from their local authority.

### ■ **Veterans: Mental Illness**

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[82404\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what support the Government has made available to help ensure that the mental health conditions of armed forces veterans are not perceived by employers as career limiting (a) in and (b) out of the armed forces.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Veterans offer huge skills, talents and economic potential to society, including employers. One of the commitments in the Government's Veterans Strategy Action Plan, published in January this year, is to tackle the outdated and incorrect perceptions that some in society hold about veterans. We are working closely with the business community - for example Deloitte's Veterans Work programme, and research organisations such as the Forces in Mind Trust - to identify perceived barriers and break them down by showcasing the incredible achievements of veterans, including those who, like people from across society, have been affected by mental health challenges.

Alongside this the Government works closely with employers, for example through the MOD's Career Transition Partnership, to provide a platform which brings together those leaving the Armed Forces and employers seeking to access the talent of the Armed Forces community together. Many people serve full and exceptional careers in the Armed Forces whilst successfully managing mental ill-health. However, there are instances where the severity of mental ill-health means serving in the Armed Forces is no longer a viable option. Transition and welfare support is available for those who are discharged as a result of mental ill-health.

## DEFENCE

### ■ **Armed Forces: Complaints**

**Jessica Morden:**

[\[81695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the number of extant service complaints as of 28 August 2020 in (a) the Army, (b) Royal Air Force, (c) Royal Navy which have been ongoing for (i) 0-6 months, (ii) 6-12 months, (iii) one-two years, (iv) two-three years, (v) three-four years, (vi) four-five years, (vii) six-seven years, (viii) seven-eight years, (ix) eight-nine years, (x) nine-10 years (xi) over 10 years.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The requested information is provided in the following table and was current as at 31 August 2020:

| TIME PERIOD            | 0-6 MONTHS | 6-12 MONTHS | 1-2 YEARS | 2-3 YEARS | 3-4 YEARS | 4-5 YEARS | 6-7 YEARS | 7-8 YEARS | 8-9 YEARS | 9-10 YEARS | OVER 10 YEARS |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Army</b>            | 180        | 120         | 95        | 35        | 10        | ~         | -         | ~         | ~         | -          | -             |
| <b>Royal Air Force</b> | 75         | 20          | 25        | ~         | -         | -         | -         | -         | -         | -          | -             |
| <b>Royal Navy</b>      | 55         | 40          | 20        | 5         | 5         | ~         | -         | -         | -         | -          | -             |

**Notes:**

Figures are single Service estimates and have not been verified by Defence Statistics.

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 to prevent the inadvertent release of personal data and figures fewer than 5 are represented by '~'. Zero is '-'.

■ **Armed Forces: Counter-terrorism**

**Gill Furniss:**[\[78788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in how many countries the UK armed forces are conducting counter-terrorism operations; and in how many of those countries the UK is (a) conducting air and drone strikes and (b) deploying troops where they may use or have used lethal force.

**James Heappey:**

UK Armed Forces are currently operating in support of counterterrorism operations in four countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Mali), and are presently providing counterterrorism training to an additional nine partner nations: Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia Kenya, Lebanon, Maldives, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The RAF is conducting strike operations only in Iraq and Syria. The publicly available 'Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2018 to 19' contains further details. UK Armed Forces retain an inherent right to self-defence wherever they are deployed. This includes up to (and including) lethal force if there is an imminent threat to life and it is judged that there is no other way to stop the danger.

**Gill Furniss:**[\[78789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries the UK is (a) conducting air and drone strikes and (b) deploying military personnel on counter-terrorism operations.

**James Heappey:**

UK Armed Forces are currently operating in support of counterterrorism operations in four countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Mali), are presently providing counterterrorism training to an additional nine partner nations: Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia Kenya, Lebanon, Maldives, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The RAF is conducting strike operations only in Iraq and Syria. The publicly available 'Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2018 to 19' contains further details.

**Gill Furniss:**[\[78791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which countries in 2019 UK armed forces were deployed on counter-terrorism operations where they used lethal force.

**James Heappey:**

During 2019 UK Armed Forces exercised lethal force in Iraq and Syria as part of the counter-Daesh campaign.

**■ Armed Forces: Universal Credit****Gareth Thomas:**[\[81496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to publish official statistics of the (a) total number of serving armed forces personnel in receipt of universal credit and (b) mean average amount of universal credit received by those serving armed forces personnel; and if he will make a statement.

**Gareth Thomas:**[\[81497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he plans to take to (a) encourage and (b) assist eligible armed forces personnel in receipt of the New Entrant Rate of Pay to apply for universal credit; and if he will make a statement.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Ministry of Defence has no plans to collect information on the numbers of Service personnel who are in receipt of Universal Credit. The claiming of benefits is a private matter between the individuals claiming and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Armed Forces offer their personnel a package which includes a competitive salary, subsidised housing and a non-contributory pension. Following a period under training, starting salaries for Other Ranks have risen to £20,400 per annum to ensure they are paid a living wage; new entrants' rate of pay is payable for a maximum of six months. We would, therefore, anticipate only a small minority of serving personnel being eligible for Universal Credit. However, for the minority of those who are eligible, which may include new entrants undergoing training, advice and assistance in making an application is available from a variety of sources, including Commanding Officers, the single Service welfare organisations, SSAFA and Citizens Advice. Information on universal credit is also available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

## ■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[83680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the upgrade programmes of (a) the Warrior and (b) Challenger II.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Since re-baselining the project in September 2017, the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme has held to schedule. The Demonstration Phase is due to be completed in 2021. Neither the ongoing System Requirement Acceptance nor the Reliability Growth Trials have identified major issues or concerns.

In April 2019, the Investment Approvals Committee approved an expanded assessment phase to address enhancements to the Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank's lethality and survivability. Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land presented a proposal in February 2020 to upgrade the tank. A Full Business Case approval is scheduled for late 2020.

## ■ Army Personnel Centre

**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[84141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the facility at the Army Personnel Centre enabling people to trace the service records of their relatives will be fully operational; and when a search made for an individual with Army Service Number 14603451 and date of birth 5 June 1907 can be actioned.

**Johnny Mercer:**

Due to COVID-19, staff at the Army Personnel Centre (APC) in Glasgow have been required to work from home since lockdown. During this time, they have received over 10,000 requests for copies of Service records. Most Service records are in their original hard copy paper format and could not therefore be retrieved from the archives and copied by APC staff working at home. Although APC staff have now started returning to the workplace, it is not possible to say how long it will take to process all the requests they have received. However, the request for a copy of the Service record relating to Army Service Number 14603451 has been completed and was sent to the requester on 28 August.

An online facility is also being developed by the Ministry of Defence to enable individuals to apply for the Service records of deceased military service personnel. This is subject to assessment by the Government Digital Service later this year. If that assessment is positive the online system will be made available to the public via the Government Digital Service platform.

**■ Defence: Employment****Andrew Griffith:** [\[82647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of jobs that defence procurement supports in (a) Sussex and (b) the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) spent £19.2 billion with UK industry and commerce in 2018-19, directly supporting around 119,000 jobs in the UK and indirectly supporting many thousands more.

In South East England, during the same time period, MOD expenditure with industry and commerce was £4,581million supporting around 27,500 jobs.

The MOD does not publish data on a county basis.

**■ Devonport Dockyard****Luke Pollard:** [\[83947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what representations he has made on recycling the retired Royal Navy submarines in Devonport as a stated objective of the Integrated Review.

**Jeremy Quin:**

We will not speculate on the outcome of the Integrated Review, but we remain committed to the disposal of our decommissioned submarines in a safe, secure, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner, as soon as practicably possible.

**■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft****Mr Tobias Ellwood:** [\[83683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to reduce the order of F35's from the original number of 138.

**Jeremy Quin:**

As set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015, funding has been approved for the procurement of 48 Lightning aircraft out to 2025. These are being procured in lots and we have taken delivery of 18 aircraft and have contracted for 17 new airframes to be delivered between 2020 and 2022. Negotiations for further lots are ongoing.

The guiding principle of the Integrated Review is to identify the threat and the appropriate capability to meet it. Any decisions on the future direction of the Lightning programme as a result of the Integrated Review will be firmly based on those principles.

## ■ Libya: Military Aid

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[83682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what military assistance the Government is providing to Libya.

**James Heapey:**

The Government is actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to secure an end to the fighting and a return to the UN-led political process. The Government is currently providing no military assistance to Libya.

## ■ Military Aid: Coronavirus

**Mr Tobias Ellwood:**

[\[83681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of UK armed forces have participated in supporting the Government's efforts to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**James Heapey:**

Since the start of COVID-19, approximately 14,000 Defence Personnel have contributed to COVID-19. This number includes approximately 7,850 deployed personnel (including Operations RESCRIPT and BROADSHARE) and approximately 6,150 at reachback.

## ■ Ministry of Defence: Public Expenditure

**John Healey:**

[\[81534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department's spending benefits the economy of each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) spent £19.2 billion with UK industry and commerce in 2018-19, directly supporting 119,000 jobs across every region and nation of the UK and indirectly supporting many thousands more.

The MOD is committed to supporting the UK defence industry. Since 2015, we have published a National Shipbuilding Strategy, launched the Combat Air Strategy and refreshed our Defence Industrial Policy. Our Defence Prosperity Programme, set out to Parliament in March 2019, aims to grow Defence's contribution to UK prosperity, including by working to sustain and develop an internationally competitive and productive UK Defence sector.

The MOD is also leading a review of the UK's defence and security industrial sectors, which will enhance our strategic approach to best support a competitive, innovative and world-class industrial base that drives investment and prosperity across the Union, which can then underpin national security now and in the future.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Racial Discrimination****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[82313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to ensure that his Department does not contain institutional racism.

**Johnny Mercer:**

While Defence has long recognised that any form of racism or discrimination is absolutely unacceptable and has continued to challenge itself to become more diverse and inclusive, we recognise the pace of change needs to quicken. Efforts are being redoubled to fulfil the key objective in Defence's 2018-2030 Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Strategy to eliminate discrimination and improve diversity throughout Defence.

Progress against Defence's D&I Strategy in the last 12 months has included a new governance structure with ambitious levels of ambition across Defence, as well as an increased scrutiny and monitoring function. Diversity and Inclusion is being integrated in top level boards and mainstreamed through the transformation programme. At the very highest levels of Defence, from the Executive Committee downwards, we have been, and will continue to reflect on and discuss our own behaviours and attitudes.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is continuing its efforts to implement all the recommendations made in the Wigston review to tackle unacceptable behaviour. On 1 September, the MOD launched a new, independent, whole-force helpline on bullying, harassment and discrimination to offer support and advice to personnel. All MOD personnel (civilian and military) complete mandatory diversity and inclusion training courses, including on unconscious bias, and a new Active Bystander course has been rolled-out to equip personnel with the skills to effectively challenge unacceptable behaviour.

**■ Ministry of Defence: Staff****John Healey:**[\[81529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff are employed in the defence and aerospace industry by his Department's contractors and sub-contractors in the constituency of (a) Durham North West, (b) Stockton North, (c) Blackpool North, and Cleveleys, (d) Burnley, (e) Hyndburn, (f) Pendle, (g) Ashfield, (h) Derby South, (i) Lincoln, (j) Loughborough, (k) Sherwood, and (l) Coventry North West.

**John Healey:**[\[81530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff are employed in the defence and aerospace industry by his Department's contractors and sub-contractors in the constituency of (a) Wolverhampton North East, (b) South East Cambridgeshire, (c) Stevenage, (d) Portsmouth North, (e) Portsmouth South, (f) Filton and Bradley Stoke, (g) Alyn and Deeside, (h) Wrexham, (i) Torfaen, (j) Islwyn, (k) Vale of Glamorgan, and (l) Paisley and Renfrewshire North.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not collate information on the defence and aerospace industry at a constituency level, or details concerning subcontractors.

The MOD estimates the number of direct jobs supported by MOD expenditure with industry and commerce at a UK national and regional level. Our latest data from the 2018-19 Financial Year is demonstrated below:

| NATION AND/OR REGION INCLUDED | CONSTITUENCIES  | MOD EXPENDITURE WITH INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE IN THAT NATION AND/OR REGION (£ MILLION) | NUMBER OF JOBS SUPPORTED IN THAT NATION AND/OR REGION |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| East Midlands                 | Ashfield; Derby South; Lincoln; Loughborough and Sherwood     | 893   | 6,500   |
| East of England               | South East Cambridgeshire; Stevenage                          | 1,140   | 6,100   |
| North East                    | Durham North West; Stockton North                             | 96  | 600   |
| North West                    | Blackpool North, and Cleveleys; Burnley; Hyndburn; Pendle     | 1,965   | 12,500  |
| Scotland                      | Paisley and Renfrewshire North                                | 1,758   | 10,200  |
| South East                    | Portsmouth North; Portsmouth South                            | 4,581   | 27,500  |
| South West                    | Filton and Bradley Stoke                                      | 5,184   | 32,500  |
| Wales                         | Alyn and Deeside; Islwyn; Torfaen; Vale of Glamorgan; Wrexham | 1,086   | 7,700   |
| West Midlands                 | Coventry North West; Wolverhampton North East                 | 583   | 4,300   |

**Angela Crawley:****[82100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of his Department's staff were based in Scotland in each year from 2016 to 2020.

**Johnny Mercer:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) publishes annual location statistics for UK Regular Service and MOD Civilian staff. Table 2.1a of the 2020 publication includes the number of MOD personnel based in Scotland as at April each year since April 2012 and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/location-of-all-uk-regular-service-and-civilian-personnel-annual-statistics-index>

**■ Ministry of Defence: Training****Neil O'Brien:****[77800]**

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

**Johnny Mercer:**

The requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unconscious Bias training is a mandatory requirement for all Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian employees and is integrated into Civil Service Learning's Diversity and Inclusion 2019 on-line course, with refresher training undertaken every two years. Furthermore, the MOD is exploring the possibility of making the Active Bystander Fundamentals course a mandatory training requirement to give staff the skills with which to tackle discrimination in the workplace.

The MOD is fully committed to creating an inclusive environment for all and to be truly identified as a 'Force for Inclusion'. The Joint Service Publication (JSP) 763 (Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedures) has been revised to align with the Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018, providing an increased focus on promoting an inclusive culture in the workplace.

**■ Prosecutions: Reviews****Mrs Sharon Hodgson:****[81651]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the review of the Prosecutor's Protocol has begun, and when that review is planned to (a) conclude and (b) be published.

**Johnny Mercer:**

In June 2020 the Secretary of State for Defence decided to give fresh consideration to the Service Justice System Review recommendation on legislative changes to the jurisdiction of the Court Martial for the offences of murder, manslaughter and rape when committed in the UK. The circumstances in which such offences are tried by Court Martial are currently referred to in a Prosecutors' Protocol. The fresh

consideration of the Service Justice System Review recommendation is underway and the work is due to be completed by autumn 2020.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ 5G: Huawei

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[78666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2020 to Question 74566 on Telecommunications, what role local authorities will play the removal of Huawei from the 5G network; and what plans he has to engage with local authorities on that removal.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government engages regularly with local authorities, and they have a critical role in the deployment of digital infrastructure. However, the equipment that operators use to deploy digital infrastructure is chosen based on their own commercial decisions and is not affiliated with any local authority. The process for complying with the Government's decision on the use of Huawei 5G equipment will include commercial decisions that are for the mobile operators to make.

The Telecoms Security Bill, once introduced, will provide the government with the powers needed to compel mobile operators to limit or remove high risk vendors from their 5G networks, and will include compliance and enforcement arrangements.

### ■ Arts and Culture: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[83864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to help ensure resources from the £1.57 billion funding for cultural, arts and heritage institutions are distributed to groups supporting under represented people with protected characteristics.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

The Culture Recovery Fund will provide targeted support to critical cultural, arts and heritage organisations to help them survive and recover through the coronavirus pandemic. Funding will be prioritised to institutions of national and international significance and those that are crucial to levelling up places and communities, including smaller organisations and cultural venues that are at the centre of their communities.

Key organisations in England are able to apply for grants or loans. When making funding decisions, the Arms Length Bodies delivering the funding will be taking into account an organisation's track record of delivering social benefit and welcoming diverse audiences. Organisations in receipt of this funding will also be expected to demonstrate progress in diversity and outreach over the coming years.

**■ Arts: Coronavirus****Ian Byrne:**[\[77839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what processes his Department will use to monitor the distribution of the £880m grant funding to the arts sector to ensure that diversity in (a) the arts and (b) the freelance workforce is maintained during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Organisations in receipt of funding will be expected to demonstrate progress in diversity and outreach over the coming years in return for this investment into their futures.

All successful applicants will be required to participate in a post-programme evaluation and to comply with proportionate progress reporting and monitoring arrangements.

**Ian Byrne:**[\[77845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will make it its policy to reinstate the provisions under the (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (b) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme for people employed in the arts sector in the event of a second wave of covid-19.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Currently, DCMS are working to aid sector reopening, and support organisations who are in need of financial support due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are tracking the public health situation and scientific guidance closely in order to ensure we are able to support sectors using clear guidelines. Should the scientific guidance change in the future, or the coronavirus situation worsen, we will continue to work through what guidance and support is necessary to support our vital arts and creative sectors.

From the Government's £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund we have held back £258m in reserve to provide us with flexibility to respond to the path of covid-19 and its impact. The Government will conduct a Spending Review this year and all decisions regarding funding for future financial years will be considered at that event.

**■ Arts: Finance****Ian Byrne:**[\[77837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish a timeframe for the release of the £880m grant funding for the arts sector.

**Ian Byrne:**[\[77838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish the criteria his Department will use to determine the distribution of the £880m grant funding to the arts sectors.

**Ian Byrne:**

[77843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make extended financial support available for freelancers in the arts sector when the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme end to respond to venues not being (a) permitted to open as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased and (b) able to offer contracts of employment to freelancers in that sector.

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[78487]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the loss of income to freelance photographers as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Christine Jardine:**

[78830]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the arts support package is fairly distributed to (a) smaller organisations, (b) arts practitioners and (c) art support workers, including the (i) smaller-scale theatre and live performance sector, (ii) smaller year-round independent venues, (iii) community-based organisations and (vi) freelancers.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

On 5 July, the Government announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. Guidance has been published by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for applicants to the Culture Recovery Grants application rounds, and by Arts Council England for applicants to the Repayable Finance Scheme. Further details on eligibility and application processes are available in the published guidance.

This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of sectors, with one of our core objectives being to support the cultural organisations that are crucial to places across the whole country. We will ensure that funding is distributed fairly, and that smaller organisations and cultural venues that are at the centre of their communities are protected.

We also recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers.

**Ian Byrne:**

[77840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason (a) institutions and (b) individuals in the arts sector will be required to demonstrate how they have contributed to wider economic growth in order to access the Government's support package for the arts; and what steps he is taking to ensure that the criteria for eligibility will not exclude smaller provincial venues and artists from being eligible for those funds.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

On 5 July, the Government announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. In order to receive support, organisations will need to demonstrate that they are at risk in this financial year and have done all they can to exhaust other options. Guidance published by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund sets out further details on eligibility requirements for the package.

While we would like this investment to go as far as it can in spreading support across the country, funding will not be available for every organisation. As such, the delivery bodies will be prioritising institutions of national and international significance and those that are crucial to levelling up places and communities and economic growth across the country. As part of that, we are ensuring that funding is distributed fairly, and that smaller organisations and cultural venues that are at the centre of their communities are protected.

**Ian Byrne:**[\[77841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to underwrite the £270 million of repayable finance in his funding package for arts and cultural organisations in England; and what the repayment timeframe is for those loans.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

The Repayable Finance Scheme is intended to assist larger organisations who need more than £3m, and that have a history of financial resilience. Thorough financial checks will be conducted prior to awards being granted, and recipients will need to demonstrate financial viability as a result of receiving the award. This support package represents the most cost effective way of preventing key cultural and heritage organisations from insolvency, and the repayable finance option will ensure a return to the taxpayer on their investment.

Loans will be available on generous terms including a payment term of up to 20 years, an initial repayment holiday of up to four years and a 2% interest rate per annum. Further details are available in the guidance published by Arts Council England.

**■ Bowling: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[81614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support ten-pin bowling alleys during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Dan Jarvis:**[\[81908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to financially support bowling alleys during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Bowling alleys have been permitted to reopen in line with Covid-19 Secure guidelines since 15th August, except in specific areas where local restrictions are in place.

Bowling alleys are able to benefit from the reduced rate of VAT which the Government has applied to attractions, accommodation and hospitality from 15 July 2020-12 January 2021. To support businesses - including bowling alleys - through Covid-19, the Government has also introduced a comprehensive support package, including business rates relief for eligible leisure businesses and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

We have supported bowling alleys by working closely with stakeholders to develop further Covid-19 Secure reopening guidance for venues. Specific guidance on bowling alleys has been published within UKHospitality's 'COVID-19 Secure Guidelines for Hospitality Businesses.' We continue to meet regularly with the wider sector through the Cultural Renewal Taskforce's Sport and Visitor Economy working groups.

**Alberto Costa:**[\[82083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what criteria his Department used when deciding to delay the proposed reopening of bowling alleys due to take place 1 August 2020.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

As the Prime Minister stated on 31st July, our assessment at the time was that we should pause reopening activity slightly in order to keep the virus under control. 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.

Bowling alleys have been permitted to reopen in line with Covid-19 Secure guidelines since 15th August, except in specific areas where local restrictions are in place.

Bowling alleys are able to benefit from the reduced rate of VAT which the Government has applied to attractions, accommodation and hospitality from 15 July 2020 until 12 January 2021. To support businesses - including bowling alleys - through Covid-19, the Government has also introduced a comprehensive support package, including business rates relief for eligible leisure businesses and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

We have supported bowling alleys by working closely with stakeholders to develop further Covid-19 Secure reopening guidance for venues. Specific guidance on bowling alleys has been published within UKHospitality's 'COVID-19 Secure Guidelines for Hospitality Businesses.' We continue to meet regularly with the wider sector through the Cultural Renewal Taskforce's Sport and Visitor Economy working groups.

**■ Broadband: Worcestershire****Sajid Javid:****[81794]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the roll-out of superfast broadband to rural communities in (a) Worcestershire and (b) Bromsgrove District.

**Matt Warman:**

Good progress has been made in Worcestershire, with over 96% of premises able to access superfast broadband - up from 25% in November 2010. In Bromsgrove District, over 96% of premises have access to superfast broadband, up from 24% in October 2010. Gigabit-capable coverage in the District stands at 49% which is almost double the UK figure of 26%.

For those premises that are still struggling from slow speeds, DCMS runs a voucher scheme that can be used by rural communities across the UK to reduce the cost of installing gigabit-capable connectivity. This provides a voucher worth up to £3,500 for eligible small businesses and vouchers worth up to £1,500 for residents. The department is also in discussion with Worcestershire County Council about a 'top-up' scheme which could potentially increase these voucher values.

Furthermore the government has pledged £5 billion to invest in the hardest to reach areas of the UK. Supplier engagement has taken place over the summer, and their feedback will be used to refine and finalise the delivery vehicle of the programme.

Bromsgrove was included in recent Openreach announcements of towns that they have included in the first wave of their national fibre rollout programme which they call "Fibre First". The full list, including Bromsgrove, is here:

<https://www.openreach.com/content/dam/openreach/openreach-dam-files/images/fibre-broadband/fibre-first/DCMS%20Transparency%20Data%20Capture%2029%20Jul%202020.pdf>

**■ Broadband: Ynys Mon****Virginia Crosbie:****[82605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to improve broadband provision in Ynys Mon constituency.

**Matt Warman:**

Good progress has been made in the Ynys Mon constituency, with over 93% of premises in the constituency able to access superfast broadband. This is up from 6% in March 2013. Gigabit-capable coverage in the constituency stands at 19%, above the Welsh coverage figure of 16%.

The Ynys Mon constituency is included in the North Wales Wave 3 project as part of the Local Full Fibre Networks programme. The project is connecting 413 public sector sites across the six local authorities (Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Gwynedd County Council, Isle of

Anglesey County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council) that make up North Wales.

In addition, there is a Rural Gigabit Connectivity project that is looking to connect a further 103 public sector sites across Wales - the Ynys Mon constituency is included in this project too.

For those premises that are still struggling from slow speeds, DCMS runs a voucher scheme that can be used by rural communities across the UK to reduce the cost of installing gigabit-capable connectivity. This provides a voucher worth up to £3,500 for eligible small businesses and vouchers worth up to £1,500 for residents. Increased funding is available for eligible small businesses and residents in Wales, where the Welsh Government is 'match funding' the vouchers, doubling the above figures.

Furthermore the government has pledged £5 billion to invest in the hardest to reach areas of the UK. Supplier engagement has taken place over the summer, and their feedback will be used to refine and finalise the delivery vehicle of the programme.

#### ■ **Business and Leisure: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[78535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the economic effect of continued covid-19 lockdown restrictions being imposed on (a) business conferences and (b) other large scale events.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We are holding three business event pilots in September as part of our preparations to help the sector safely reopen and begin its recovery. It remains our aim that the further reopening of events will be allowed from 1st October, if the host business has written a risk assessment and has put in place mitigations to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission, and provided that rates of infection remain at current levels. This is also subject to the successful completion of pilots.

I encourage affected events organisers to continue to make use of the Government's comprehensive support package to protect businesses and workers.

#### ■ **Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation**

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[83791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what role his Department had in the appointment of Sir Roger Taylor as the Chair of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Chair of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation was appointed in July 2018 by the then Secretary of State following an open and fair competition.

**■ Culture: Coronavirus****Ian Byrne:** [\[77842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will (a) provide and (b) encourage insurers to provide freelance workers in the cultural sector with a personal insurance scheme that includes cover for covid-19-related illnesses.

**Ian Byrne:** [\[77844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to provide backdated financial support to freelancers in the arts sector who are not eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

DCMS recognise that these are extremely challenging times for freelancers, and understand the crucial role they play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. We are working hard to ensure that we help to provide financial support to freelancers during this period.

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

As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers. Each organisation that receives money will know what best they can do to support their workforce, including their freelance workforce.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has also been extended with applications opening in August for a second and final grant. The grant will operate in the same way as the existing scheme with self-employed workers eligible for a single payment covering three months, at a level of 70% of average monthly earnings up to a maximum of £6,570 (i.e. down from 80% and a maximum of £7,500).

Alongside this funding, ACE have announced £95m of additional support for individuals, which can include freelancers. This involves things such as an additional £75m in project grants. These will be focused on applications that maximise employment opportunities and those from under-represented groups and freelancers are eligible to apply to this directly. National Portfolio Organisations can also apply to create new work with bids that create employment opportunities prioritised. A further round of the ACE programme 'Discover Your Creative Practice' will also open in the autumn, which will make approximately £18m available for individuals looking to develop new creative skills that will help them to further develop their career. ACE will also be adding £2m into relevant benevolent funds to support those less well supported by the programmes outlined above, including stage managers and technicians.

## ■ Culture: Employment

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[78523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to protect jobs in cultural industries.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

In March, the Government implemented an unprecedented package to support businesses, charitable organisations, workers and the self-employed through the Coronavirus crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and business rates relief in particular are providing support to organisations across the arts sector. CBILS for example, has made it easier for SMEs with a turnover of up to £45 million to access vital financial support during these difficult times.

The extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was announced in May, which was extended to the end of July, with more flexibility being introduced from August to October.

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

As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way. Each organisation that receives money will know what best they can do to support their workforce and keep job losses to a minimum. We recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading, and DCMS are doing everything we can to aid in the protection of jobs, especially as the sector begins to reopen.

## ■ Cybercrime: Business

**Martyn Day:**

[\[82153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many successful cyber attacks took place against businesses in the UK in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

**Matt Warman:**

In the Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2020 (data collected in 2019) it was reported that 46% of business and 26% of charities reported experiencing a cyber security breach or attack in the last 12 months.

In 2020, it was reported that of those who experienced a cyber security incident, 19% of businesses and 25% of charities reported an incident having any negative outcome. Figures for the last four years are taken from the Cyber Security Breaches Survey.

| YEAR | BUSINESSES | CHARITIES |
|------|------------|-----------|
| 2020 | 19%        | 25%       |
| 2019 | 25%        | 21%       |
| 2018 | 34%        | 40%       |
| 2017 | 38%        | 41%       |

The Cyber Security Breaches survey aims to account for all the types of breaches or attacks that organisations might face. This includes accidental breaches, as well as ones perpetrated intentionally. It also includes recorded cyber attacks that did not necessarily get past an organisation's defences (but attempted to do so). While the survey does not specifically identify successful cyber attacks, it does nevertheless isolate the cases that had a material outcome, such as a loss of money, assets or other data. This only measures the breaches or attacks that organisations have themselves identified.

Figures for the last 4 years are taken from the Cyber Security Breaches Survey.

#### ■ Cybercrime: Business and Government Departments

**Martyn Day:**

[\[82152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2020 to Question 54172 on Business and Government Departments: Cybercrime, how many such cyber security incidents were reported in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

**Matt Warman:**

In the Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2020 (data collected in 2019) it was reported that 46% of business and 26% of charities reported experiencing a cyber security breach or attack in the last 12 months. Figures for the last 4 years are taken from the Cyber Security Breaches Survey.

| YEAR | BUSINESSES | CHARITIES          |
|------|------------|--------------------|
| 2020 | 46%        | 26%                |
| 2019 | 32%        | 22%                |
| 2018 | 43%        | 19%                |
| 2017 | 46%        | Data not collected |

The survey aims to account for all the types of breaches or attacks that organisations might face including accidental breaches, as well intentional and recorded cyber

attacks that did not get past an organisation's defences. This only measures the breaches or attacks that organisations have themselves identified.

## ■ Cybercrime: Small Businesses

**Martyn Day:**

[\[82154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 54171 on Small Businesses: Cybercrime, what recent steps his Department has taken to promote the uptake of the Cyber Essentials Scheme in (a) the UK, (b) Scotland and (c) Linlithgow and East Falkirk constituency.

**Matt Warman:**

Cyber Essentials is promoted nationally through partnerships with over 50 amplification partners, including regulatory bodies and trade associations. It is also required for all central government contracts. The government works with law enforcement to engage with local businesses through Regional Organised Crime Units, one of which is run by Police Scotland. Alongside this, Scotland's Business Resilience Centre offers subsidised, bespoke cyber security advice to SMEs, including about Cyber Essentials certification. There are eight further Regional Cyber Resilience Centres throughout the UK.

The Government's Cyber Aware campaign shows the public and small businesses how to take up secure online behaviours, including signposting businesses towards Cyber Essentials and other guidance and support.

Up to the end of August 2020, 50,421 Cyber Essentials certificates had been awarded to organisations, including 11,506 since the start of 2020.

**Martyn Day:**

[\[82155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 12 June 2020 to Question 54171 on Small Businesses: Cybercrime, what recent steps his Department has taken to publicise the availability of the UK Government's Cyber Aware advice.

**Matt Warman:**

Cyber Aware is a cross-government campaign led by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) with support from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Home Office. The campaign helps the public and small businesses take up behaviours to stay secure online. The most recent phase of the Cyber Aware campaign started in April 2020 with advice on how to stay secure online during the coronavirus crisis. The campaign included a range of paid-for digital advertising and social media activity, supported by further communications from the NCSC, DCMS and Home Office. In addition, the NCSC published a range of new guidance to help businesses stay secure, including advice on secure home working, secure use of video conferencing and advice on how to move a business online securely in response to the lockdown. Also launched as part of the campaign is the new Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) where the public can flag suspicious emails related to coronavirus or other matters. As of 31 August, the

number of reports received stands at more than 2,330,000, with 9,315 scams and 22,237 malicious URLs removed as a result.

#### ■ Events Industry: Culture Recovery Fund

**Dr Dan Poulter:** [\[81782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will extend the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage to include (a) rental companies and (b) the entire live events supply chain.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Applications for the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage are now closed. This funding will be used to support organisations across the heritage sector that have exhausted all other financing options and are now at risk of failure.

The package is intended to support the nation's most important organisations. Funding will not be available for every organisation – applications were based on and scrutinised against rigorous criteria to prioritise support. Therefore, it is not possible to assist every type of organisation that makes up our broad and varied heritage sector. Applications were not accepted if they were from organisations that manage heritage that are not in England, organisations that were not operating sustainably before March 2020, organisations that need more than £3million to stabilise and organisations that manage or preserve natural habitats and species.

The core objective for this funding is to support the cultural organisations that are crucial to places across the whole country. Applicants would have needed to demonstrate they were viable and have a credible plan in place showing how government support would be used in the most cost effective way

#### ■ Internet: Safety

**Emma Hardy:** [\[83920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether racist abuse and disinformation will be within the remit of the Government's planned online harms regulatory system.

**Caroline Dinenage:**

The new online harms regulatory framework will require companies to put effective systems and processes in place to protect UK users. The Online Harms White Paper set out an indicative list of harms which will be in scope of the new regulatory framework. Further details will be included in the full government response to the consultation, which we will publish later this year.

#### ■ Leisure: Coronavirus

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[78536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions he has met with representatives of the British Association of Leisure Parks,

Piers and Attractions, to discuss (a) regulations and (b) potential reopening dates during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS officials have spoken to representatives of the visitor attractions industry and also several other key sector members to discuss guidance and next steps to reopening the sector.

My Department's officials held a number of discussions with British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA) - including several calls and virtual meetings during July and August - regarding the development of reopening guidance.

I appreciate BALPPA's assistance and constructive engagement with my officials throughout this period.

**Sir Alan Campbell:**

[\[81575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when indoor play centres will be allowed to open as lockdown restrictions are eased due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Alberto Costa:**

[\[82084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what guidance his Department has issued to soft play areas for their safe reopening as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Damien Moore:**

[\[82346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the Government's timeframe is for the reopening of soft play centres as covid-19 lockdown measures ease.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

On 13 August, the Government announced that indoor play and indoor soft play venues could open from 15 August. We worked with BALPPA, the trade body that represents the industry to develop guidance that lays out detailed measures for indoor play and indoor soft play operators to make venues COVID-secure. These include closing ball pits and sensory areas, reducing capacity of venues and soft play frames, regular deep cleaning, pre-bookable timed sessions, increased sanitation, and a rigorous process to support track and trace. We will continue to engage with the sector and will keep the guidance under regular review.

■ **Music: Coronavirus**

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[78852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he expects to issue guidance on when amateur choirs can (a) rehearse together and (b) perform in person as covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[78853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the level of transmission of covid-19 between individuals in (a) professional and (b) amateur choirs that requires them to be dealt with differently in guidance.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

DCMS has always been clear that the Performing Arts guidance would be updated on the basis of the latest science and public health context.

The PERFORM study (published 20 August) has indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing in and attending events that is likely to create the risk of transmission. As a result of these findings we have updated the Performing Arts guidance to confirm that non-professionals can now engage in all activities, including singing, wind and brass and confirmed that where non-professional groups plan to meet, there are no set limits on the numbers who can be involved when taking place outside and/or in a Covid-secure venue. This is in line with rules on meeting people outside your household for clubs and groups and gatherings in Covid-secure venues.

Organisations must ensure that they carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment and that individuals are socially distanced at all times. Organisations will want to minimise risk as far as possible and the Performing Arts guidance sets out a number of mitigations that should be considered to minimise risk including operating outside where possible, limiting the numbers involved in and duration of activity and considering how ventilation can be improved.

## ■ National Archives

**Julian Sturdy:**

[\[78650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to increase accessibility to files held by the National Archives for people living outside London.

**Caroline Dinéage:**

Like many archives within the sector, The National Archives has adapted its services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and for the remainder of 2020, anticipate limited on-site access to their physical collections. Therefore, The National Archives remains committed to expanding remote access to its collections, with a focus on making content discoverable and, where possible, available online.

In response to its temporary closure in the spring, The National Archives provided free online access to a wide range of digital and digitised records through its Digital Downloads Service, for which demand has increased more than 2,000%. While The National Archives reopened to the public on 21 July 2020, it has continued to provide this free online access alongside its present onsite service offer.

Since 2003 The National Archives has captured, preserved, and made freely accessible the UK Government Web Archive, which includes billions of webpages,

videos, tweets and images from government dating from 1996 to the present day. Throughout the pandemic, the UK Government Web Archive has been critical in capturing the comprehensive record of fast paced coronavirus information published by the UK Government, through high-intensity web archiving.

Finally, as the Queen's Printer and the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), The National Archives aids legal certainty through legislation.gov.uk, with the registration and publication of legislation which is freely accessible to anyone regardless of locality.

## ■ Newspaper Press: Internet

**Emma Hardy:**

[\[83919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether comments on newspaper website forums will be considered to be user generated content for the purpose of the Government's legislative strategy for tackling online harms.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

Online harms regulation seeks to improve online safety while ensuring pluralism, freedom of expression and media freedoms are protected online, Online harms regulation will not duplicate existing regulatory activity. The former DCMS Secretary of State made it clear in his 2019 letter to the Society of Editors that existing regulation on moderated comment sections on news sites would not be duplicated. Full details on the scope of online harms regulation will be published in the full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper Consultation later this year.

## ■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus

**Laura Farris:**

[\[77834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the press release entitled, £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's world-class cultural, arts and heritage institutions, what the process is for freelancer (a) performers, (b) musicians and (c) third party providers to access that funding; and what the timeframe is for freelancers to apply for that funding.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

On 5 July, the Government announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. Guidance has been published by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for applicants to the Culture Recovery Grants application rounds, and by Arts Council England for applicants to the Repayable Finance Scheme. Further details on eligibility and application processes are available in the published guidance.

This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of sectors, with one of our core objectives being to support the cultural organisations that are crucial to places across the whole country. We will ensure that funding is distributed

fairly, and that smaller organisations and cultural venues that are at the centre of their communities are protected.

We also recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers.

### ■ **Telecommunications: Fees and Charges**

**Mick Whitley:**

[\[83962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing statutory restrictions on the amount that telephone and broadband providers can charge customers in call-out and repair fees.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government is not currently considering restrictions on call-out and repair fees in telecoms. However, Ofcom, the independent telecoms regulator has a statutory duty to further the interests of consumers, and it has brought in a number of measures to protect consumers in relation to repairs and when things go wrong with their services.

For instance, in April 2019, Ofcom introduced a voluntary automatic compensation scheme, which BT, Sky, TalkTalk, Virgin Media, Zen Internet, Utility Warehouse, and Hyperoptic have all signed up to. Through this scheme, customers of the companies that have signed up will automatically receive compensation for delayed repairs following loss of service (£8 for each calendar day); missed appointments by an engineer/cancellations with less than 24 hours notice (£25 per missed appointment) and delayed start of a service (£5 for each calendar day)

Furthermore, Ofcom obliges communication providers to prioritise repairs for disabled people, and to ensure that these charges are not higher than standard charges.

Alongside these measures, last year Ofcom also secured a set of 'Fairness for Customers' commitments from all the major communication providers. These commitments are designed to embed a culture of fairness within the industry. For instance, providers have committed to give their customers fair deals, and provide the support needed by their vulnerable customers. Ofcom will be publishing a report on industry progress against these commitments in Q4 2020/21.

### ■ **Television Licences: Older People**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:**

[\[81573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that pensioners do not suffer (a) social isolation or (b) loneliness as a result of the withdrawal of free TV licences from the over 75s.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government recognises the importance of television to people of all ages, particularly for older people who value television as a source of entertainment, companionship and a way to stay connected with the world. We are urging the BBC to do more for older people affected by its decision to restrict the over 75 concession.

It is also worth noting that my colleague Baroness Barron, the Minister for Loneliness, launched a National Awareness campaign for loneliness this summer, as part of the government loneliness strategy backed by £20 million of government funding.

**Theatres: Coronavirus****Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[77483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to announce how theatres can apply for the Government support package for the arts in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Caroline Dinenge:**

On 5 July, the Government announced a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. Guidance has been published by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund for applicants to the Culture Recovery Grants application rounds, and by Arts Council England for applicants to the Repayable Finance Scheme. Further details on eligibility and application processes are available in the published guidance.

This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of sectors, with one of our core objectives being to support the cultural organisations that are crucial to places across the whole country. We will ensure that funding is distributed fairly, and that smaller organisations and cultural venues that are at the centre of their communities are protected.

We also recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers.

**Third Sector: Coronavirus****Stuart Anderson:**[\[77805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the financial sustainability of (a) civil society organisations and (b) charities in (i) Wolverhampton South West and (ii) England during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. This will

ensure charities and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 outbreak.

£200 million of this money is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund which is mainly targeting smaller and local VCSE organisations. Under the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, a total of 518 awards valued at £12.36 million has been allocated to organisations in the West Midlands, as at 28th August 2020.

£360 million has been allocated by central government departments with £200 million of this directly supporting hospices across the country. From this money, a total of 40 awards to the value of £3.1 million have been allocated to organisations in the West Midlands, as at 28th August 2020.

A further £4.8 million will be distributed to the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership - a group that comes together to improve national and local coordination before, during and after emergencies - to help strengthen the voluntary sector's response to coronavirus and future emergencies.

To support the BBC's 'Big Night In', the Government matched the generous donations of the public across the country with grants to the National Emergencies Trust working in Partnership with the UK Community Foundations (£20million) and to the remaining £17million being shared by Comic Relief and Children in Need. £1.14 million from the National Emergencies Trust grant was allocated to the Heart of England Community Foundation. Under the National Emergencies Trust, Comic Relief and Children in Need grants, a total of 125 awards valued at £723,029 have been made to organisations in the West Midlands as at 28th August 2020.

The 'Community Match Challenge' which is matching funds raised by philanthropists, foundations and grant making organisations will further support small to medium sized organisations from across the country working with those who are most vulnerable and have been hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak. This Fund closed for bids on 2nd August and the outcome will be announced shortly.

In addition to the £750million, a further £150m has been unlocked from dormant bank and building society accounts which will be directed to charities, social enterprises and individuals.

Finally, civil society organisations and charities can access additional business support measures including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back Loans.

## ■ Tourism: Motorhomes

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

**[81777]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he is taking steps to encourage local authorities to support and improve motorhome facilities in towns and rural areas to increase tourism and economic activity from that sector.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

We are in regular contact with representatives of the motorhome and caravan park industry, such as the British Holiday & Home Parks Association (BH&HPA). We are listening closely to the sector's views, and we understand the concerns of motorhome and caravan park businesses, motorhome owners and holidaymakers.

The government is encouraging local planning authorities to exercise their discretion in relation to planning conditions for motorhome, caravan, campsites and holiday parks, in order to help these businesses extend their open season. See the Written Ministerial Statement HCWS367, made on the 14th July by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders, including local authorities to assess how we can most effectively support tourism's recovery across the UK.

■ **Vodafone: Huawei****Chi Onwurah:**[\[78665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of Vodafone's evidence to the Science and Technology Committee on 9 July 2020, HC450, on the cost of removing Huawei from its network; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Vodafone's answer to question 145 in evidence to the Science and Science and Technology Committee on 9 July 2020, HC450.

**Matt Warman:**

The Government's advice has been clear that operators need to plan to remove all Huawei 5G equipment by 2027. It will be for individual operators to determine how to achieve that, and therefore the exact nature of any costs and delays will be specific to each operator. In his oral statement of 14 July, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport provided estimates for impacts on mobile network operators overall in terms of costs and rollout delays.

**EDUCATION**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mary Robinson:**[\[905505\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as they return to school as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

**Sir Robert Neill:**[\[905514\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people as they return to school as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

**Vicky Ford:**

Getting children and young people back into education, with settings devoting time to supporting wellbeing, will play a fundamental part in supporting children and young

people's mental health. The return to school will allow social interaction with peers, carers and teachers, which benefits wellbeing. The department has now published detailed plans for all children and young people to return to full-time education from September. The guidance for schools is available here:

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

We have been working hard to ensure that all pupils and learners will return to a full high-quality education programme in September. Our £1 billion Covid catch-up package, with £650 million shared across schools over the 2020-21 academic year, will support education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-covid-catch-up-plan-to-tackle-impact-of-lost-teaching-time>.

As pupils return to school, staff need to be equipped to understand that some children and young people may be experiencing feelings in such as anxiety, stress or low mood as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, and that these are normal responses to an abnormal situation. Our Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Advice includes information about what to look for in terms of underlying mental health issues, linked to the graduated response and the support that might be suitable. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>.

From September, the Government is investing £8 million to launch the new Wellbeing for Education Return training programme, which will provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents, to help improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This is additional to longer term work to improve support, including the new mental health support teams that we are rolling out across the country, linked to schools and colleges. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8m-programme-to-boost-pupil-and-teacher-wellbeing>.

The department in collaboration with Public Health England and NHS England, delivered two webinars in July to provide further mental health support. The first webinar was for schools and colleges to support teachers in promoting and supporting the mental wellbeing of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak. The second event was for stakeholders across the local system to support strengthening of local partnerships to further support children and young people's mental health as they return to school. We had around 10,000 sign up to the first webinar and around 1,300 to the second, and they are now available online for wider use.

We continue to working in partnership across education, health, the voluntary sector and local authorities to ensure that children and young people, parents and carers, and the professionals supporting them:

- can access good-quality resources

- are confident in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing (as well as their own) and
- ensure access to specialist services when they're needed.

Access to mental health support is more important than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS mental services remain open. All NHS mental health trusts are providing 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages. The Government has also provided over £9 million to mental health charities to ensure they can continue to support people experiencing mental health challenges throughout the outbreak.

**Chris Green:**

[\[905507\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support good (a) attendance and (b) behaviour as pupils return to school as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is vital for all pupils to return to school to minimise the impact of the pandemic on their education. It is important for schools to also be calm and disciplined environments, where everyone follows the rules.

We have published guidance for school leaders to support them to:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families throughout the summer ahead of the new school year
- identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them using the additional catch-up funding schools will receive
- work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including social workers and other specialist services
- update behaviour policies and communicate any new rules clearly and consistently to staff, pupils and parents
- ensure appropriate provision is in place for pupils with additional needs. Some children will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity which may lead to social, emotional and mental health concerns.

To support this work on the ground, regional teams continue to engage regularly with local authorities to understand any barriers to attendance. We are also working with stakeholders to enable schools and LAs to share best practice to improve attendance and ensure a smooth transition back to school.

More widely, we are running a 'Back to school' campaign which seeks to reassure parents and explain the measures that education providers are taking to reduce the risk of transmission.

We have also worked with local authorities and transport providers to make sure children/young people can get to school/college safely, providing more than £40 million of additional funding to create extra capacity.

The Department will shortly be inviting schools with exemplary behaviour to deliver the Behaviour Hubs programme and support those schools that need additional support in turning around their behaviour cultures. Over the Autumn term, National Leaders of Education will continue to work with schools most affected by COVID-19, including in improving behaviour.

**Richard Thomson:**

[\[905508\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on visas and immigration rules for international students studying in the UK after the transition period.

**Michelle Donelan:**

My department engages across Government and with the Devolved Administrations on a regular basis, including through a programme of meetings which was introduced to discuss the future immigration system after the publication of the Immigration White Paper in December 2018.

EU students in the UK on, or prior to, 31 December 2020 are eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme – the deadline for applications is 30 June 2021.

From October 2020, all students (EU and non-EU) will be able to apply for a visa via the Student and Child Student routes, which will build on the current Tier 4 visa system. When the Student route opens there will be a number of improvements which will further streamline the immigration process. This will include extending the visa application window for prospective students to six months and allowing international students to apply for further leave as a Student or switch into other routes from inside the UK (in-country switching). Changes to the new Student route have been developed via extensive engagement with the sector and have been based upon the Law Commission's report on the simplification of the Immigration Rules.

In addition, Government announced that PhD graduates will benefit from three years of leave in the UK under the new Graduate route when it is introduced in Summer 2021. International students graduating with undergraduate or master's degrees will be able to stay in the UK to work, or look for work, for two years after graduation. This will continue to improve the UK's globally competitive offer to international students.

Government has published, and updated, bespoke guidance for students setting out important flexibilities at this time. These have included enabling international students to complete distance/blended learning for the upcoming academic year, provided students' sponsors intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow, and confirming that those studying by distance/blended learning will be eligible to apply for the Graduate route provided they are in the UK by 6 April 2021 and meet other requirements of the route.

**Gary Sambrook:**

[\[905509\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to ensure that children do not miss time in education as a result of local covid-19 lockdowns.

**Mark Logan:**

[\[905516\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to ensure that children do not miss time in education as a result of local covid-19 lockdowns.

**Gavin Williamson:**

The department is supplementing the £100 million it has already invested to support remote education. In the event of local lockdowns due to a coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak where face-to-face education is not possible, there will be an ongoing role for remote education. DfE can provide additional devices to schools for them to support disadvantaged children. The department is initially making an additional 150,000 laptops and tablets available to schools, from September, available to schools to support disadvantaged children who would not otherwise have access to remote education; specifically disadvantaged children:

- in years 3 to 11 if their school is closed
- across all year groups who are shielding as a result of official advice
- across all year groups who attend hospital schools that are closed
- who are completing their Key Stage 4 at a further education college that is closed

We have already provided over 50,000 4G wireless routers to support disadvantaged children to learn at home and access vital social care services. These routers come with free data for the autumn term and will allow LAs and academy trusts to support children who may have their education and care disrupted because of official coronavirus restrictions or disruption to face-to-face contact.

In partnership with BT, the department has also launched a service to provide children and young people free access to BT Wi-Fi hotspots. Through the pilot, up to 10,000 families should be able to access a BT Wi-Fi connection. We are currently working with BT to expand this offer for the autumn term to allow more children to access the internet through their network of BT Wi-Fi hotspots.

We are also working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families. We are piloting an approach where for families who rely on a mobile internet connection, mobile network operators will provide temporary access to free additional data offering them more flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

**Fiona Bruce:**

[\[905511\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help schools improve their buildings and facilities to provide high-quality education.

**Dehenna Davison:**

[\[905518\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help schools improve their buildings and facilities to provide high-quality education.

**Nick Gibb:**

The government has committed to invest more than £23 billion in the school estate between 2016-17 and 2020-21. This includes a combination of formula and bid-based allocations to schools, local authorities and academy trusts as well as centrally delivered programmes.

As part of this, the Priority School Building Programme is rebuilding or refurbishing buildings in the worst condition at over 500 schools.

The government has provided £560 million in additional condition funding this year for repairs and upgrades in schools - on top of £1.4 billion already committed in 2020-21.

The Prime Minister announced plans in June for a transformative ten-year school rebuilding programme. This will replace poor condition school buildings with modern, energy efficient designs, transforming education for thousands of pupils.

We will start with 50 schools in the most need of repair, supported by over £1 billion in capital funding, with full details of these projects and further funding for the programme to be set out later in the autumn at the Spending Review.

**Patrick Grady:**[\[905537\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on allocating additional funding for (a) further and (b) higher education.

**Marion Fellows:**[\[905538\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on allocating additional funding for (a) further and (b) higher education.

**Michelle Donelan:**

In Further Education, we are providing up to £96 million to support disadvantaged students whose studies have been disrupted.

We have announced a number of measures to help ensure there are no barriers to students being able to progress to Higher Education in 20/21. We have lifted caps on domestic medicine and dentistry courses in the next academic year and we are supporting providers to offer places to as many students who have met the grades for their current offer as they have physical capacity for, and where there are clinical placements available, through additional grant funding to support the costs of this provision. Health Education England and the Office for Students will be contacting all medical and dental schools to discuss their capacity to take on additional students in the 2020/21 academic year.

I can now confirm that providers will be eligible to bid for a share of up to £10 million funding to support capital expenditure on infrastructure required to accommodate additional students recruited as a result of the changed policy on A level grades. The fund will be administered by the Office for Students, and providers will be eligible to bid for projects that support expansion in 2020/21.

Additional teaching grant funding will also be provided to increase capacity in medical, nursing, STEM and other high-cost subjects which are vital to the country's

social needs and economy. All high cost subjects, which already receive additional funding from the Office for Students will potentially see further increases where there is an unexpectedly high distribution of students. The Office for Students will consult the sector on the details of how the allocations are made.

We will also be considering all Departmental funding as part of the Spending Review.

## ■ After School Clubs: Academies

**Luke Pollard:**

[82361]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has provided to academy schools on after-school provision during the covid-19 outbreak following their reopening in September 2020.

**Vicky Ford:**

We have published guidance for schools to outline the protective measures they should have in place to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 when all children return to school in the autumn term. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The guidance highlights that schools should work to resume any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. Additionally, the guidance highlights that schools should work closely with any external wraparound providers which their pupils may use, to ensure as far as possible, that children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day.

Schools can also consult the guidance produced for providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children, as much of this will be useful in planning extra-curricular provision. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

## ■ Apprentices: Care Leavers and Special Educational Needs

**Emma Hardy:**

[77785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the £1,000 incentive payment available to any employer taking on an apprentice aged 16-18, or aged 19-24 with an Education Health and Care plan or care leaver, is also available to an employer taking on such a person on a supported internship.

**Gillian Keegan:**

It is a priority of the department to improve the outcomes of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The SEND Code of Practice states that all children and young people with SEND should be prepared for adulthood, including employment, and that this preparation should start early.

Structured study programmes, based primarily at an employer, such as supported internships, help young people aged 16-24 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to achieve sustainable paid employment through learning in the workplace. In 2017, the government announced £9.7 million for local authorities to increase the number of supported internships and other pathways to employment for young people with SEND, by establishing local supported internship forums and training additional job coaches.

The number of young people undertaking a supported internship has been rising annually. The most recent report was in January 2020 and showed that 2,231 young people with EHC plans were undertaking supported internships, an increase from 1,646 from the same time in 2019 and 1,186 in 2018.

Work is currently ongoing, as part of the SEND Review, to consider how best to continue to boost employment outcomes for young people on EHC Plans.

The £1000 additional payment for employers who take on apprentices aged 16-18 or aged 19-24 who have previously been in care or who have a local authority EHC plan, is in recognition of the additional costs associated with supporting these groups in the workplace. This payment is not available to employers taking on these young people on a supported internship.

#### ■ Children in Care: Reviews

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[77572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the timeframe is for the completion of his Department's review of Looked after Children.

**Vicky Ford:**

The Care Review is a fundamental part of the government's manifesto. The urgent local and national response to COVID-19 has delayed launching the Care Review but we are making preparations to launch as soon as possible and will set out further details at that point. The review will be bold, broad and independently led, taking a fundamental look across children's social care, with the aim of better supporting, protecting and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people.

#### ■ Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[77679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 72965, on Schools: Mental Health, whether schools will be able to use the £650 million catch-up premium for pastoral support for young people.

**Vicky Ford:**

The £650 million 'catch-up premium' is to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. Our expectation is that this funding will be spent on the additional activities required to support children and young people to catch up after a period of disruption to their education.

To support settings to make best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 Support Guide for Schools with evidence-based approaches to catch-up for all students. Schools should use this document to help them direct their additional funding in the most effective way, which is available here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/#nav-covid-19-support-guide-for-schools1>.

The guide is clear that evidence-based interventions, including those focused on tackling pupils' behaviour or social and emotional needs in order to support them with re-engaging with school, will support pupils to catch up as they return to school.

The Education Endowment Foundation have also published a further School Planning Guide for the new academic year, which is available here: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/guide-to-supporting-schools-planning/>.

## ■ Disabled Students' Allowances: Coronavirus

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:**

**[81940]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reasons covid-19 cannot be cited as a reason to grant additional (a) study skills and (b) mentoring hours to higher education students that qualify for Disabled Students' Allowances.

**Michelle Donelan:**

All students requiring a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) must undertake a Study Needs Assessment to ascertain the type and level of support that they require to access the teaching and learning provided by their higher education provider.

Where a student's DSA support needs to change, for whatever reason, they should contact Student Finance England to request a DSA re-assessment. This can be for reasons related to COVID-19 or for any other reason.

## ■ Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes

**Cat Smith:**

**[82078]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the accessibility of the free school meal vouchers system for families who (a) do not have access to internet-enabled technology and (b) do not feel able to use that technology.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government has taken unprecedented and substantial action to ensure that no child should go hungry as we take measures to tackle COVID-19, including in relation to free school meals.

In the first instance, we asked schools to support eligible pupils by providing meals or food parcels through their existing food providers wherever possible. We also established a national voucher scheme to support schools and families where required.

Schools were best placed to decide how to support families eligible for free school meals in their areas, and this includes considerations over access to the internet. Where parents were not able to access the national voucher scheme, we recommended that the school print and post the voucher to families. If there were issues with postal deliveries, we advised schools to consider a safe collection point for families to collect their vouchers.

#### ■ Nurseries: Finance

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[81634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to announce a new funding settlement for maintained nursery schools.

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[81635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that a new funding settlement for maintained nursery schools includes the Borough of Barnet.

**Vicky Ford:**

Maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas. The government announced on 24 August that up to £23 million of supplementary funding will be provided to local authorities to enable them to continue protecting the funding of maintained nursery schools during the summer term in 2021. This provides maintained nursery schools with certainty about funding for the 2020-21 academic year.

What happens after the 2020-21 academic year will be determined by the Comprehensive Spending Review in the context of our priorities across early years as a whole. Future arrangements will be for all maintained nursery schools, including those in Barnet.

This government remains committed to the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools, and any reform to the way they are funded will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections.

**Theresa Villiers:** [\[83688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will include Barnet within the scope of his transitional funding for maintained nursery schools.

**Vicky Ford:**

Maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas. The government announced on 24 August that up to £23 million of supplementary funding will be provided to local authorities to enable them to continue protecting the funding of maintained nursery schools during the summer term in 2021. This provides maintained nursery schools with certainty about funding for the 2020-21 academic year. It is a one-term continuation of current maintained nursery school supplementary funding; it is not a new transitional fund.

What happens after the 2020-21 academic year will be determined by the Comprehensive Spending Review in the context of our priorities across early years as a whole. Future arrangements will be for all maintained nursery schools, including those in Barnet.

This government remains committed to the long-term funding of maintained nursery schools, and any reform to the way they are funded will be accompanied by appropriate funding protections.

## ■ **Physical Education: Coronavirus**

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[77857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to increase Government funding for physical education programmes in schools to help tackle (a) inactivity among children during the covid-19 lockdown and (b) childhood obesity.

**Nick Gibb:**

Physical education (PE) is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum and remains a national curriculum foundation subject at all Key Stages 1-4. The Department is working to ensure that schools are fully supported, as they welcome more children back to school, to give pupils opportunities to take part in physical education and be physically active during the school day.

Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls. It is important that children continue to remain fit and active and, wherever possible, have the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officers.

To support effective curriculum delivery, schools' core funding is rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20 funding levels. The Government has also announced an additional £650 million 'catch up' premium, as part of our wider £1 billion COVID catch-up package, to be shared across all state-funded schools over the 2020-21 academic year.

The Government is also providing funding specifically for PE and school sport and recently confirmed that the PE and sport premium will continue to provide £320 million for primary school PE and sport in the coming academic year. The Department for Education is working with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Health and Social Care to implement the School Sport and Activity Plan. We are also looking at further action to deliver on manifesto commitments to help schools make good use of their sports facilities and to promote physical literacy and competitive sport, in light of the budget announcement earlier in the year.

While schools have been closed to some pupils, steps have been taken to support those who have had restricted opportunity to exercise while at home. As part of its guidance on remote education provision, the Department has published online educational resources approved by subject experts for schools and parents to help children to take part in PE and physical activity.

## ■ Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus

**Emma Hardy:**

**[83916]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to make provision for postgraduate students whose courses have been extended as a result of covid-19 but are disallowed by Student Finance England from applying for further supporting loans through compelling personal reasons and other mechanisms.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Students are eligible to access one loan up to the maximum amount that was available when they started their course. There is no discretion within the regulations to increase the entitlement where a student extends their study, but students who have not accessed the maximum loan can apply for an additional amount of loan.

If a student has withdrawn from their course due to Compelling Personal Reasons, they may nonetheless be eligible for a further loan for a second full course.

Withdrawal as a result of reasons connected to COVID-19 is usually considered to be one such Compelling Personal Reason.

Many higher education providers will have hardship funds to support students in times of need, including emergencies. The expectation is that, where any student requires additional support, providers will support them through their own hardship funds.

We have worked closely with the Office for Students to enable higher education providers to draw upon existing funding to increase hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. As a result, providers were able to use the funding, worth around £23 million per month for April to July 2020 and £256 million for the academic year 2020/21 starting from August, towards student hardship funds.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Finance

**Tulip Siddiq:**

**[78781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing funding for maintained nursery schools to support the implementation of the recent pay rise for public sector workers.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government recognises that maintained nursery schools are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas.

All nurseries, including maintained nursery schools, are benefiting from the continuation of early years entitlement funding during the COVID-19 outbreak. On 20 July, we set out our plans for funding local authorities and providers in the autumn term which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/use-of-free-early-education-entitlements-funding-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

On 24 August, we announced that local authorities will continue to receive supplementary funding for their maintained nursery schools for the whole of the 2020-21 academic year. What happens after the 2020-21 academic year will be determined by the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The announcement can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-support-package-to-help-close-covid-language-gap>.

## ■ Pre-school Education: Social Distancing

**Damien Moore:**

**[82349]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has for issuing further guidance on which social distancing measures will need to be in place when pre-school education resumes during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

Keeping children safe is our utmost priority.

From 20 July, early years settings (including nurseries and childminders) have been allowed to return to normal group sizes. This is because there is moderate to high scientific confidence in evidence suggesting younger children are less likely to become ill with COVID-19, and high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they do get ill. Furthermore, early years settings are already required to operate within strict staff-child ratio and space requirements.

We continue to expect that early years settings will consider how they can minimise mixing within settings, for example where they use different rooms for different age groups, keeping those groups apart as much as possible.

Settings are also required to follow a Public Health England endorsed 'system of controls' to minimise risks. For example, enhanced cleaning, thorough hand cleaning, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where applicable. Detailed guidance has been issued and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe> ; and here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>.

## ■ Private Tutors

**Stephen McPartland:**

**[83785]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what Government support is available to help small tutoring companies become an approved Tuition Partner; and if he will make a statement.

**Stephen McPartland:**

**[83786]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the application process for tuition companies to become NTP Tuition Partners is fair and transparent; and what appeal system is in place for that application process.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), our delivery partner on the Tuition Partner strand of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), launched the funding criteria on 31 August. Organisations will be selected to become NTP Tuition Partners through an open competition - the process is transparently set out on their website, together with information on criteria and expectations of partners:

<https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/ntp-tuition-partners/for-tuition-partners>.

As this is a competitive process, there are no plans to offer specific support for individual companies. Quality is the core principle of this programme, and EEF are seeking high quality tutoring organisations of any size, who can manage delivery in line with robust quality, safeguarding and evaluation standards. EEF anticipate inviting a large number of organisations to be Tuition Partners. In addition to existing tutoring providers, EEF are happy to accept applications from other organisations, for example, charities, local authorities or universities who are able to meet the necessary criteria. Applications will also be welcome from partnerships made up of a number of organisations with differing, but relevant, experience.

EEF will not have an appeals system for this process. They will, however, offer feedback on all applications, to help unsuccessful applicants understand how they might improve their offer in the future.

## ■ Pupils: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[83868]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all school pupils have access to face masks.

**Jim McMahon:**

**[83894]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the advice which informed the decision not to make the wearing of face coverings by pupils aged 12 and over a requirement in schools in England.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's priority is for pupils to safely return to schools and colleges and we have taken the latest medical and scientific advice into account at each stage of responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

On 21 August 2020, the World Health Organisation published a new statement ( <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19> ) advising that children aged 12 and over should wear face coverings under the same condition as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1 metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area. As a result,

the Department has revised its guidance on face coverings in schools and colleges. The guidance for schools can be found here:

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

It is reasonable to assume that staff and young people will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society, and Public Health England has made available resources on how to make a simple face covering.

**Robert Halfon:** [\[84211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance has been provided to local authorities and schools to support the safe return of pupils with sight loss during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Robert Halfon:** [\[84212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to monitor the characteristics of pupils returning to school and those remaining at home, including whether a pupil has sight loss, to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are not being excluded and disadvantaged.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department has published guidance to support the return to school of all children and young people for the autumn term, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Guidance for the full opening of schools is available here:

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

Guidance for the full opening of special schools and other specialist settings is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

While the department will collect data on pupils with SEND characteristics overall, the department is not collecting data on attendance in relation to different individual SEND characteristics.

## ■ Pupils: Disability Aids

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[78704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils who require assistive technologies to access online material.

**Margaret Greenwood:** [\[78705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of organisations with the level of expertise required to specify assistive technologies for pupils who require such assistance.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department does not hold data in relation to the number of pupils needing assistive technology to access online material, or on the adequacy of the number of organisations with the level of expertise required to specify it for pupils who require such assistance.

The department trusts schools and local authorities to decide and provide the necessary equipment and assistive technology to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The department has ordered over 200,000 devices and allocated these to local authorities and academy trusts based on estimates of the number of eligible children that do not have access to a device through other means, such as a private device or through school. The scheme is an injection of support, alongside many excellent local initiatives, and local authorities and schools are best placed to identify eligible children who do not already have access to a device.

Beyond the device and connectivity support, 40 teachers have come together to develop the brand-new Oak National Academy, launched at the start of the summer term. Oak Academy provides 180 video lessons for free each week, across a broad range of subjects, for every year group from reception through to year 10. Education resources are also available offline. Children are able to draw on support from the BBC which is broadcasting lessons on television, and may choose to access the many hard copy resources offers which have been produced by publishers across the country.

**■ Special Educational Needs****Apsana Begum:**[\[78873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support he will make available to parents of children with special educational needs over the summer holidays 2020.

**Apsana Begum:**[\[78874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to deliver equivalents to holiday play schemes for children with special educational needs.

**Vicky Ford:**

Supporting the most vulnerable children, young people and adults is a priority for us, especially at this time. This is a challenge unlike any we have faced in our lifetimes. We know that this period is particularly hard for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and those who support them. Co-production with families, partnership and communication remain critical.

Short breaks (or 'respite care') are funded opportunities for disabled children and young people to be cared for away from the family homes, which local authorities have a statutory duty to provide. Local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their local area and to commission provision appropriately. We have

published guidance to support providers in operating safely and emphasised the importance of prioritising the delivery of service which support disabled children and young people.

On 2 July 2020, the government announced that an additional £500 million funding will be available for additional expenditure across local government services, taking the total additional funding made available to local authorities to £3.7 billion. This can support local authorities to deliver their respite offers (in line with their existing duties) and to address increased costs.

On 19 May 2020, the department announced that the family fund will receive funding of £37.3 million in 2020-21 to help low income families with seriously ill or disabled children (over 75,000 families). £10 million of the total has been committed specifically in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Our Holiday Activities and Food Programme is integral to our approach to provide healthy food and activities to children over the summer. On 22 June, we announced 17 local authority areas that will benefit from our holiday activities and food programme this summer 2020, providing thousands of children with access to healthy meals and enriching activities, building on the success of the 2018 and 2019 programmes. This programme is open all children eligible for free school meals in those areas, including those with SEND.

#### ■ Special Educational Needs: Durham

**Mary Kelly Foy:**

**[84353]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for SEND education in Country Durham.

**Vicky Ford:**

We committed to supporting local authorities who have struggled with their high needs budgets. That is why we are putting £730 million into high needs nationally next year (2021-22), which represents a 10% increase; coming on top of the additional £780 million we have provided this year (2020-21), that means the high needs funding block will have increased by over £1.5 billion, or 24% in just 2 years. County Durham will receive £61.2 million this year, and for next year has a provisional allocation of £69.4 million, an £8.2 million increase. Provisional allocations for 2021-22 can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022>.

#### ■ Special Educational Needs: Finance

**Apsana Begum:**

**[78875]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to allocate additional resources to local councils for the provision of support for families with SEND children.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are aware that local authorities have experienced pressures on their high needs budgets. That is why we are putting £730 million of additional funding into high needs

next year, which represents a 10% increase. Coming on top of the additional £780 million in 2020-21, that means that high needs budgets will have grown by over £1.5 billion, or 24%, in just two years.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has a provisional high needs funding allocation of £66 million next year, which is a £6.3 million increase compared to this year. Provisional allocations for every local authority can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022>.

Alongside additional funding, we are continuing the review of the system of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to see what improvements are needed. We are also working with local authorities that have the largest deficits to make sure that they have realistic recovery plans and the support they need to implement them.

## ■ Sports: Clubs

**Nadia Whittome:** **[78931]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether sports clubs outside schools will be allowed to operate due to the covid-19 outbreak in September 2020.

**Nick Gibb:**

As of 4 July, providers offering out-of-school activities to children, such as sports clubs, including those not based on school premises, have been able to open for both indoor and outdoor provision with safety measures in place.

Out-of-school provision will continue to be permitted to operate during the autumn. The Department has updated the guidance for providers of holiday and after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings during the COVID-19 outbreak to outline the protective measures that settings should put in place to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of the virus, and to operate as safely as possible when all children return to school. The guidance can be found here:

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

## ■ Universities: Finance

**Jonathan Gullis:** **[82568]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department is providing to universities to help mitigate financial pressures as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government has announced a package of measures which combines different ways to give further support to providers at this time of financial pressure. We have pulled forward an estimated £2.6 billion worth of forecast tuition fee payments to ease cashflow pressure this autumn. We are also bringing forward quality-related research

funding for higher education providers in England in the current academic year by £100 million.

This is on top of the unprecedented package of support for businesses already announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and a range of business loan schemes, to help pay wages, keep staff employed and support businesses whose viability is threatened by the COVID-19 outbreak. We have confirmed higher education providers' eligibility to apply for these schemes.

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

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced further information about the Higher Education Restructuring Regime on 16 July. This may be deployed as a last resort, if a decision has been made to support a provider in England, when other steps to preserve a provider's viability and mitigate the risks of financial failure have not proved sufficient.

The overarching objectives which will guide the department's assessment of cases will be protecting the welfare of current students, preserving the sector's internationally outstanding science base and supporting the role that higher education providers play in regional and local economies through providing high quality courses aligned with economic and societal needs.

We will consider providers' circumstances on a case-by-case basis, supported by expert advice, to ensure there is a robust value-for-money case for intervention, with support for restructuring in the form of repayable loans coming from public funds as a last resort and with strict conditions that align with wider government objectives.

We are working closely with the sector, the Office for Students (OfS) and across the government to understand the financial risks that providers are facing, and help providers access the support on offer. The OfS stated that one of its key priorities during the outbreak is to support the financial sustainability of the sector.

Providers with concerns about their financial viability or sustainability have been encouraged to contact the OfS at the earliest opportunity. Considering the outbreak, the OfS has enhanced its financial sustainability reporting to identify sector and short-term viability risks to individual providers, as well as patterns across the sector.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Fisheries****Sir Roger Gale:**[\[83657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to restrict the activities of supertrawlers operating within UK fishing grounds.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We will automatically take back control of our waters, and others' right to fish in them, at the end of 2020. For the first time in 40 years, we will be free to decide who can access our waters to fish and on what terms.

The Fisheries Bill prohibits any commercial fishing vessel (including foreign-registered vessels) from fishing in UK waters without a licence. It also provides powers to attach conditions (such as the areas that can be fished, species that can be caught and the type of fishing gear that can be used) to fishing vessel licences. Foreign vessels operating in UK waters will have to follow UK rules, including the conditions that are attached to their commercial fishing licence.

Leaving the CFP gives us the opportunity to introduce a sustainable, responsible and resilient new fisheries policy. This means we will consider the sustainability of our stocks and our precious marine environment, and take the steps necessary to allow them and our domestic industry, to flourish.

**Stephanie Peacock:**[\[84328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to ensure that non-assessed fish stocks are not overfished.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government has and will continue to use the best scientific advice available in setting fishing opportunities for species that are subject to a Total Allowable Catch (TAC). This includes those stocks which do not have a Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) assessment.

**■ Fisheries: Biodiversity****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[84329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to meet Aichi Target 6 under the Convention on Biodiversity; and what assessment the Government has made of its effectiveness in seeking to meet that target.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Within the confines of the Common Fisheries Policy, the UK has made significant progress in introducing sustainable fisheries measures, including a landing obligation, subsidies and incentives for more selective gear, accreditation schemes, and area-based management measures.

For 2020, the UK will have 67% of its Total Allowable Catches set at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) out of total of 54 stocks with MSY assessments.

We recently published our Marine Strategy Part One assessment on the health and resilience of our marine ecosystems, including our progress towards the achieving our objective of good environmental status (GES) in UK waters. This encompasses the scope of Aichi Target 6.

## ■ Food: Coronavirus

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[82495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to work with third sector organisations to allow people with disabilities to self-certify as vulnerable to access donations of food and other essentials.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government has worked closely with the third sector to identify others outside of the shielded definition who may also need support in getting essential food supplies including speaking to volunteer groups, food bank organisations and redistribution charities to understand what can be done to help. We maintain regular contact with representatives across the food supply chain and civil society to ensure there is sufficient support available for those who have to stay at home, including people with disabilities.

We know the difficulties that disabled people currently face in accessing food and are taking steps to support them. We know that a large number of vulnerable people continue to rely on friends, family and wider community support. Where that is not possible, we are working with major third sector organisations to refer vulnerable people on to a variety of tailored services including facilitating access to priority supermarket delivery slots.

## ■ Hare Coursing

**Anthony Browne:**

[\[82535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the level of farming income lost as a result of (a) illegal hare coursing and (b) damage to farmlands resulting from illegal hare coursing.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government has not made an estimate of the level of farming income lost as a result of hare coursing.

The Government recognises the problems and distress which hare coursing causes for rural communities. The Hunting Act 2004 bans all hare coursing in England and Wales, including both organised and unregulated events, and all participation in or attendance at such events.

We are working with the police and stakeholders to look at further ways this issue can be addressed.

**■ Herring: Conservation****Stephanie Peacock:**[\[84330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his policy that a zero total allowable catch limit be set for the herring stock in ICES divisions 6a and 7b-c.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Whilst joint scientific advice is issued for the herring stock in ICES divisions 6a and 7b-c, they are managed separately. Since 2016, a small Total Allowable Catch (TAC) has been set based on ICES advice to enable monitoring of the stock, specifically the levels of mixing between different stocks North and South. TAC setting for 2021 will be a matter for negotiation, using this and any other available scientific evidence.

**■ Highly Protected Marine Areas: Angling****Tracey Crouch:**[\[81795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that recreational sea anglers are consulted on the implementation of Highly Protected Marine Areas.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Benyon Review was commissioned to investigate whether and how Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) could be introduced in English waters.

The Government is considering the Review's recommendations and has started to engage with stakeholders including recreational fishers. Since publication of the Review, Minister Pow has met the Angling Trust (14 July) and Defra officials have met recreational sea anglers (29 July) and the Angling Trust (13 August) to discuss the recommendations of the Review. Further meetings with these groups are planned for early September.

**■ Plastics: Biodegradability****Sir Charles Walker:**[\[84165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether oxo-degradable plastics which are produced in the UK will be excluded from EU Directive 2019/904 Article 5 after the end of the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The measures taken in EU Directive 2019/904 Article 5 place restrictions on items which can be placed on the market within the EU. Any item listed in Article 5 which is produced in the UK will therefore not be able to be sold in the EU from July 2021.

Waste is a devolved matter. Having left the EU, the UK Government now has the opportunity to reprioritise and refresh our environmental policy. We will be focusing on tackling single-use plastic items in ways that work best for us, including considering alternative approaches to the Directive to deliver the same or better overall outcome.

The Government published a call for evidence last year to help consider the development of product standards or certification criteria for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics as well as to better understand their effects on the environment and our current waste system. We are currently analysing the responses received to inform future policy in this area. More information can be found on the GOV.UK website:

[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-biodegradable-compostable-and-bio-based-plastics-call-for-evidence](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-biodegradable-compostable-and-bio-based-plastics-call-for-evidence).

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ CDC: Coronavirus

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[82266]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with representatives of the CDC on private hospitals in receipt of funding from his Department making a profit during the covid-19 pandemic.

**James Duddridge:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ministers and officials are engaged in regular discussions with the CDC Chairman and Executive Leadership Team.

CDC is delivering a counter-cyclical response that supports developing countries in Africa and South Asia to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare providers in CDC's portfolio are working to support national governments in their efforts to deal with COVID-19 including through providing specific support to government requests for designating isolation wards or units.

MedAccess, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CDC, recently announced a new partnership with UNICEF to secure vital COVID-19 medical products, including diagnostic tests and clinical management supplies, for low- and middle-income countries. MedAccess, will provide a guarantee of up to £37.3 million to help accelerate access to medical supplies in the fight against the pandemic.

### ■ China: Uighurs

**Afzal Khan:**

[83928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the new infrastructure built in Xinjiang to imprison Uyghur Muslims; and what steps he is taking to help support the human rights of Uyghurs.

**Nigel Adams:**

We are closely monitoring reports suggesting additional detention camps are being constructed in Xinjiang. The UK plays a leading role in drawing attention to the deeply concerning situation in Xinjiang. On 30 June, the UK read out a formal statement on

behalf of 28 countries at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council highlighting arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly those targeting Uyghurs and other minorities, and urging China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights meaningful access to Xinjiang. On 28 July, the Foreign Secretary raised our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang with his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi. We will continue to raise our concerns with China bilaterally, and through the UN working alongside international partners.

## ■ Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Training

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[77797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCO takes unconscious bias training seriously. All staff must complete mandatory online unconscious bias training once every three years. There are three ways the FCO supports staff in this learning: by direct access to the Civil Service Learning (CSL) website, by accessing CSL via the FCO's internal learning system, Global Learning Opportunities (GLO), or by attending courses delivered overseas by learning specialists and learning champions.

The FCO is only able to access records for staff who have accessed the CSL unconscious bias training offer via the second of these routes, i.e. via GLO. Over the last five years, a total of 2,896 FCO staff accessed CSL unconscious bias training in this way. The FCO can provide an annual breakdown for 2019 and 2020, but not for 2016-18. In 2019, 566 FCO members of staff completed the CSL online unconscious bias training, and so far in 2020, 555 FCO members of staff have undertaken the training.

## ■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[77760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the timescale is for launching the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office; and what estimate he has made of the length of transition period required before that Department will be fully operational.

**James Duddridge:**

The new department will be formally established this month under the leadership of the Foreign Secretary to meet the objectives of the UK's ambitious international agenda. Full transformation will be developed and delivered through the phased transformation programme.

## ■ India: Christianity

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[77847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on anti-conversion laws in India in relation to converting people from Hindu to Christianity.

**Nigel Adams:**

We engage India on the full range of human rights matters. We work with Union and State Governments, as well as NGOs, to build capacity and share expertise to promote human rights for all. Where we have concerns we raise them directly with the Government of India. Most recently, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon discussed the situation for India's minorities with the Acting Indian High Commissioner on 22 May, and has previously raised our concerns about the impact of recent legislative and judicial measures on minorities with Indian Government Ministers.

## ■ Iran: Nuclear Power

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[77579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has been made in discussions with his Iranian counterpart on the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

**James Cleverly:**

Iran's non-compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) raises serious proliferation concerns, which is why the UK, with France and Germany, triggered the JCPOA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism on 14 January in good faith and in hope of finding a diplomatic way forward, preserving the agreement and bringing Iran back to full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA. The Foreign Secretary in his statement with France and Germany on 19 June urged Iran to pursue substantial discussions and actions in coordination with us and the other remaining JCPOA participants.

## ■ Lebanon: Humanitarian Aid

**Mr David Jones:**

[\[81640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what humanitarian support his Department is providing to people in Beirut.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The UK is a long-standing friend and supporter of Lebanon and the Lebanese people. We have provided significant assistance to Lebanon, allocating over £700 million in humanitarian and development funding since the start of the Syria crisis. The UK's development support and technical expertise has generated investment and jobs, provided children with access to quality education; and provided humanitarian support to those most in need - both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese.

We will continue to stand with Lebanon in its time of urgent need following the devastating Beirut Port explosion. We have announced a £25 million package of humanitarian support making us one of the biggest donors to the crisis. £20 million of this, through the UN's World Food Programme, will help the country's most vulnerable by going directly to those families most at risk to cover their essential survival needs, including access to food and medicine. We have also allocated £3 million to the British Red Cross to meet urgent multi-sector needs. And we have deployed UK technical expertise, including medical and humanitarian specialists to assist with the response on the ground and help plan the next stages of the UK and international response.

■ **Mahmoud Nawajaa**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[81773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to help secure the release by the Israeli authorities of Palestinian human rights defender, Mahmoud Nawajaa.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Our Consulate General in Jerusalem have been monitoring Mr Nawajaa's case. Mr Nawajaa was released on 17 August without charge after 19 days of detention. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue of treatment of Palestinian detainees on 18 June with both the Israeli Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also remain concerned by the continued transfer of Palestinian detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We continue to raise our concerns in our engagement with the Israeli authorities.

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[82054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the (a) arrest and (b) detention of the Palestinian political activist Mahmoud Nawajaa.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Our Consulate General in Jerusalem have been monitoring Mr Nawajaa's case. Mr Nawajaa was released on 17 August without charge after 19 days of detention. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only

when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue of treatment of Palestinian detainees on 18 June with both the Israeli Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also remain concerned by the continued transfer of Palestinian detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We continue to raise our concerns in our engagement with the Israeli authorities.

### ■ **Mixed Migration Centre: Finance**

**Anna McMorrin:**

[\[82290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Department for International Development's budgeted funding for the Mixed Migration Centre through to April 2023 will be (a) maintained following the merger of that department with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and (b) maintained at the same level of projected spend.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Support to the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) will be maintained by FCDO Ethiopia via the 'Programme Addressing Irregular, Unsafe Migration through and from Ethiopia' until April 2023, and by FCDO Sudan via the 'Routes Based Migration Response Programme' until October 2021. Funding under the centrally-managed 'Safety, Support and Solutions Phase 2' programme, which ends in March 2021, has been reduced by approximately 10 per cent. This cut was discussed and agreed with MMC and their partners.

### ■ **Overseas Aid: Cost Effectiveness**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[82267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to put in place scrutiny measures to independently evaluate the Government's Official Development Assistance expenditure.

**James Cleverly:**

This Government is committed to transparency and robust scrutiny of Official Development Assistance expenditure. On 29 August, the First Secretary announced that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact will continue its vital role supporting Parliament in the scrutiny of UK aid's impact.

## ■ Syria: Overseas Aid

**Anna McMorrin:**

[\[82292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what was the total budget this year for DFID's Syria aid programme; and with reference to his 22 July announcement of cuts to the aid budget of £2.9bn, how much will be cut from the programme's proposed spend.

**James Cleverly:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* This financial year (2020/21) the Government budgeted £137 million for delivery of aid in Syria as a part of the UK's Syria Crisis Response. Difficult decisions have been necessary around the ODA budget to make sure we meet the 0.7 per cent commitment, however the UK continues to play a leading role in mobilising the international community.

At the Brussels Conference on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" in June, the UK pledged at least £300 million to the Syria Crisis for 2020, bringing our total commitment to over £3.3 billion since 2012. This support will continue the essential life-saving and life-sustaining assistance in Syria and provide vital support in neighbouring countries.

## ■ United Nations: Human Rights

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[77539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Review of the UN Human Rights Treaty Body System announcement by the President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 2 June 2020, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that that review enhances the effectiveness of that system in protecting international human rights.

**Nigel Adams:**

We welcome the announcement by the President of the 74th UN General Assembly on 2 June regarding the Review of the UN Human Rights Treaty Body System. The UK Government remains committed to standing up for human rights, including through the UN. We strongly support the Treaty Body System as an essential tool to support the protection and promotion of human rights, and we are committed to developing the system's effectiveness. We are actively engaging in the review process, our initial response to the call for consultation can be found here (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRTD/Pages/Co-Facilitation-Process.aspx>) and on 27 July the UK took part in a consultation with the facilitators appointed to lead the review in New York.

## ■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[82371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Zimbabwe.

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[82373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement.

**James Duddridge:**

The UK is seriously concerned about the challenging human rights situation and the continuing abductions, arrests and assault of civil society and opposition activists. We have been clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans. This is a prerequisite for further international support. I delivered these messages when I spoke to Foreign Minister Moyo on 8 June, and in a letter I wrote to the Foreign Minister on 12 August.

The humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe is also deeply worrying. Before the onset of Covid-19 Zimbabwe was already facing a humanitarian crisis due to drought and a deteriorating economy. According to recent estimates, by December more than 8.6 million Zimbabweans will likely be without the food they need. In response, we have committed £35.4 million to a Programme managed by the UN World Food Programme to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable Zimbabweans. We have also allocated £5 million to UNICEF for cholera prevention and emergency response, and £21.24 million to the Covid-19 response in Zimbabwe to ensure vital care services can continue. None of this money is channelled directly through the government.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Airports: Coronavirus

**Jon Trickett:**

[\[70310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish (a) advice and (b) guidance provided by the (i) Chief Medical Officer and (ii) Public Health England on the introduction of temperature checks for passengers at airports during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

Throughout the outbreak, all of our decisions have been informed by the best scientific evidence. This includes expert advice from multiple sources, including the Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England. Temperature screening was considered and discounted as a border measure on the basis that it is not, at present, effective or reliable in accurately identifying or rapidly screening for COVID-19. For example, temperature screening would not detect those who are asymptomatic, nor those who are symptomatic but do not have a fever.

**■ Autism: Coronavirus****Carla Lockhart:**[\[77854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of lockdown on the wellbeing of people with autism; and what steps the Government plans to take to meet the needs of people with autism over the coming months during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government recognises that social distancing and self-isolation are likely to increase the risk of loneliness and mental health issues for everyone, including for autistic people and their families and carers.

We have provided funding to and are working with a range of charities to boost their online and helpline capacity so that they are able to provide advice, support and signposting to services to a greater number of autistic people and their parents and family carers.

We have commissioned research to improve our understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on autistic people and their families as a result of the pandemic and we are identifying any new actions that could be included in the refreshed autism strategy in response to the pandemic.

**■ British Medical Journal: Correspondence****Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[64216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will respond to the open letter published on by the British Medical Journal on 23 June 2020 on a potential second wave of covid-19 in the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

We have been clear that we will continue to be guided by the latest scientific advice and will give the National Health Service whatever it needs, as we have done throughout this unprecedented pandemic.

Thanks to the dedication of NHS staff, hospitals have not been overwhelmed and intensive care capacity continues to meet the needs of patients.

Effective local management of any outbreak is the first line of protection against a second wave. In the event the local response is not sufficient to contain outbreaks, the Government would reintroduce measures if necessary, to contain the virus and stop it spreading to the wider population.

**■ British Society for Immunology: Coronavirus****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[71915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what meetings he has had with the British Society for Immunology regarding covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have no record of any such meetings.

**■ Cancer: Coronavirus****Dan Jarvis:**[\[74587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the provision and uptake of cancer services following the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 20 July 2020]:* On 8 June 2020, the National Cancer Director and the National Clinical Director for Cancer issued a further letter of guidance to NHS cancer services on Second phase of NHS response to Covid-19 for cancer services. The letter notes that the work for local systems and Cancer Alliances to identify ring-fenced diagnostic and surgical capacity for cancer should now be well advanced, so that referrals, diagnostics and treatment can be brought back to pre-pandemic levels at the earliest opportunity to minimise potential harm, and to reduce the scale of the post-pandemic surge in demand. Cancer Alliances should work with their regional teams to provide such services.

The NHS is seeking to increase people coming forward with worrying cancer symptoms through cancer-specific messages as part of the 'Help us help you' campaign.

On 3rd August 2020, NHS England and Improvement announced that 'COVID-friendly' cancer treatments, that are safer for patients during the pandemic, will be expanded and extended through a £160 million initiative. The funding will pay for drugs that treat patients without having such a big impact on their immune system or offer other benefits such as fewer hospital visits.

Regular meetings with the NHSE Cancer leads, Cally Palmer and Professor Peter Johnson are taking place to ensure service restoration goes on at pace.

**■ Care Homes: Coronavirus****Jess Phillips:**[\[46083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the failure to collect completed tests from a number of care homes, whether there has been a problem with the courier system for the collection of covid-19 tests from care homes; how many incidences of a failure to collect completed tests there have been in England; what steps he is taking to investigate the failure to collect completed tests from care homes; and what steps he is taking to ensure new tests are carried out at those homes.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* In the rare case where logistical issues have been identified, we have a dedicated team who are able to further investigate and respond.

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.

Due to this, a lower proportion of test results will be available within 24 hours of the test being taken. We are encouraging more care homes to conduct testing over the weekend (Friday to Sunday) where possible to do so, 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.

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[48446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many care homes have accessed covid-19 tests via the new portal for care home testing to date.

**Helen Whately:**

Since the launch of the Care Home Portal on the 11 May 2020, 16,717 care homes to date have requested a test through the portal, while 12,061 care homes have subsequently registered the test kit via the Test Registration portal.

We continue to issue over 50,000 tests a day to care homes across the country, with the majority of these in high priority outbreak areas. Any symptomatic person can get a test and care homes with suspected positive cases will be able to access whole home testing via their local Health Protection Team.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[62296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department is doing to ensure that test results for covid-19 are delivered to care homes in a timely manner.

**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.

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**Mr Barry Sheerman:** [\[67537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that test results for covid-19 are delivered to care homes in a timely manner.

**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.

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**Sir Alan Campbell:**[\[78527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is his policy on those in (a) care homes or (b) residential care units to require a (i) quarantine period or (ii) covid-19 test to be undertaken if they do return home for (A) a short period or (B) overnight.

**Helen Whately:**

We are aware that limiting visits has been difficult for many families and care home residents who want to see their loved ones. Guidance for visits out of a care homes is under development and will be published shortly.

**■ Care Homes: Recruitment****Sir Charles Walker:**[\[78545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on ensuring that care homes and care providers can continue to recruit staff from outside the UK in the event that vacancies remain unfilled when advertised to the domestic labour market; and if will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Home Secretary have regular discussions about the design of the future Points-Based Immigration system. The independent Migration Advisory Committee has repeatedly advised that migration should not be a solution to workforce shortages in social care. We recognise that the changes to the immigration system and the ending of freedom of movement will mean that social care employers will need to redouble efforts to promote jobs in social care to workers in the United Kingdom.

In order to attract more people into social care, we launched a new national recruitment campaign, 'Care for others; Make a difference' and an online platform to fast-track recruitment, which sits alongside many local initiatives that have been put in place to recruit staff.

## ■ Children: Mental Health

**Anne Marie Morris:**

[\[81915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to address the specific challenges to children's mental health found in rural and isolated areas.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Supporting children and young people's mental health including those living in rural areas, is one of the Government's top priorities.

We are committed to transforming mental health services as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, funded by an additional £2.3 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24. We have provided £9.2 million of additional funding for mental health charities to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are best placed to decide on how our investment in mental health services should be used to meet the needs of their populations living in rural areas. CCGs are required to continue to increase investment in mental health services in line with the mental health investment standard. In 2018/19, all CCGs met the standard.

## ■ Contact tracing: Data Protection

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[77554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 20 July 2020, Official Report 1865 and with reference to comments by his Department's spokesperson of 20 July 2020 that an overarching data protection impact assessment on the NHS test and trace service was in development, when that overarching impact assessment will be published; for what reason he did not refer to that assessment in his oral Answer to the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[78608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his oral contribution of 20 July 2020, Official Report, column 1865, on Coronavirus Response, what was the scope of each of the three data protection impact assessments; and when he plans to publish those assessments.

**Helen Whately:**

The NHS Test and Trace programme is progressing at a fast pace of development to rise to the challenges posed by the pandemic. We are continuing to work on the overarching Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). This is a live document which continues to evolve as the programme develops, as such we are meeting our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation as implemented by the Data Protection Act 2018.

The three data protection impact assessments referred to are:

- The DPIA for the NHS COVID-19 App, of which a second iteration has now been published to coincide with the launch of the pilot phase of the new app. This can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-app-privacy-information/the-nhs-test-and-trace-app-early-adopter-trial-august-2020-data-protection-impact-assessment#the-nhs-test-and-trace-app-data-protection-impact-assessment>

- The DPIA for Public Health England Contact Tracing, and;  
- The DPIA for National Antigen Testing.

As internal information risk assessments documents, DPIAs are not routinely published.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Deloitte**

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[\[44984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons his Department awarded Deloitte a contract to help distribute covid-19 tests.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* Deloitte provides vital services to the Department to support testing services and ensure that everyone who needs a test can get one. Deloitte has wide experience in project management and logistics which made them a sensible choice to deliver the contract. All contracts are awarded through a fair process.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Rushanara Ali:**

[\[45212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government (a) is taking and (b) plans to take protect (i) the BAME community, (ii) people in the most deprived areas (iii) older people and (iv) people with medical conditions that put them at greater risk from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) is reviewing the findings from Public Health England's reports to better understand the drivers behind the disparities and the relationships between the different risk factors. Her work will help us to improve understanding of the virus and who it affects so we can build on the existing action we are taking to tackle health inequalities. This includes, for example, our childhood obesity plan, National Health Service health checks, our tobacco control plan and diabetes prevention programme.

In addition, the NHS Long Term Plan commits all major national programmes and every local area across England to set out specific measurable goals and mechanisms by which they will contribute to narrowing health inequalities over the next five and ten years. As areas vary, so will the focus of their goals.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[61588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional support is available to people infected with covid-19 who experience symptoms more than 2 weeks after diagnosis.

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[64113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to (a) allocate funding and (b) provide support for rehabilitation and recovery programmes for people recovering from covid-19.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[66223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to support patients with long-term symptoms arising from contracting covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 2 July 2020]:* The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of the COVID-19 virus, including the severity and duration of symptoms. The UK Research and Innovation – National Institute for Health Research ‘Rapid Response Rolling Call’ has funded a large post-hospitalisation study. The study, announced in July, will establish a national consortium and a research platform embedded within clinical care to understand and improve long-term outcomes for survivors following hospitalisation with COVID-19.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked with the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust to develop a digital, interactive, personalised recovery programme for people recovering from COVID-19. The new ‘Your COVID Recovery’ service, which was announced on 5 July, forms part of NHS plans to expand access to COVID-19 rehabilitation treatments for those who have survived the virus but have not fully recovered.

## ■ Coronavirus: Ethnic Groups

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[68421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of BAME health and social care workers have had occupational risk assessments as at 30 June 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not currently mandate the collection of data on the completion of occupational risk assessments from social care or National Health Service providers and therefore we do not hold information about the number of health and social care workers who have had completed occupational risk assessments by 30 June 2020.

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. Completing risk assessments for at-risk members of staff is a vital component of this. NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to all NHS organisations on 24 June

requiring them to complete risk assessments for high risk staff within four weeks and to publish metrics to demonstrate compliance.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[42151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's covid-19 testing data for every day of the last three weeks, for what reasons the efficiency of tests, calculated as an average of the number of covid-19 tests conducted per person (a) peaked on 25 and 26 April 2020 and (b) was at a low on 22 and 23 April 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 6 May 2020]:* The Government does not recognise this as a measure of the efficacy of its testing programme. There are a range of reasons why testing numbers could fluctuate on a day to day basis, but we are confident in the testing programme as a means of controlling the virus and saving lives.

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[45058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to what extent local authorities have been involved in the setting up of covid-19 testing stations; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the extent of local authority involvement in that matter.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* During the first phase of the testing programme our priority was to find reliable tests, and to scale-up our capacity to deliver. We took a more centralised approach to testing, focusing on the safety of patients, those at greatest risk, getting health, social care and other essential workers back to work and on improving our understanding of the virus and its spread.

The current phase of testing gives Directors of Public Health, their councils and local partners a greater role in deciding where and who to test, building on their understanding of their local communities. Local authorities are being given greater scope to design different types of testing models which are suited to the needs of their population and local communities, with a focus on reaching communities who they know from can face barriers to accessing services.

**Justin Madders:**

[\[69588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of covid-19 home tests have not been returned by post (a) within seven days of being dispatched to a person's home and (b) in total.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 July 2020]:* We are currently setting up a digital solution to capture all home tests which are not returned by post within seven days. On 10 August 2020, 62% of home test kits had been returned.

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.

## ■ Coronavirus: Wallasey

**Ms Angela Eagle:**

[44985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the satellite testing centre for covid-19 in Bidston, Wallasey is limited to 50 swab tests a day.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 May 2020]:* We have introduced satellite testing centres as both to expand overall test capacity and to provide a more agile and flexible method to complement the fixed regional testing centres.

The daily allocations given to each testing site across the testing network are determined by many factors, including expected demand, capacity and prioritisation of certain outbreak regions. From mid-July, the capacity of the satellite testing centre in Bidston, Wallasey site has increased to 150 tests a day.

## ■ Disease Control

**Sir Graham Brady:**

[75985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the R value of (a) covid-19, (b) seasonal influenza and (c) measles.

**Jo Churchill:**

The latest value of 'R' for COVID-19 is estimated each week and published by the Government Office for Science and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

The 'R' value for seasonal influenza and measles are not assessed regularly as rates of infection and are measured in a different way. A variety of data sources are collated to provide information on circulating influenza strains. In-season and end-of-season monitoring of seasonal influenza vaccine uptake and vaccine effectiveness is undertaken. Public Health England's (PHE) ' [Flu annual report: winter 2019 to 2020](#) ' is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-flu-reports>

PHE have published the 'Measles and rubella elimination UK strategy' which includes information on transmission of measles and how to reduce transmission rates. This report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-and-rubella-elimination-uk-strategy>

## ■ Electroconvulsive Therapy

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[81606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to review the use of electroconvulsive therapy.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[82061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the (a) effect and (b) adequacy of the guidance on the use of electro-convulsive therapy on women.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides guidelines for the use of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) based on the most up to date available clinical evidence. NICE has also produced guidance, 'Depression in adults: recognition and management', which includes recommendations on when to use of ECT for complex and severe depression. The Department expects commissioners and providers of services to pay due regard to these guidelines. NICE keeps its guidance under regular review

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is tightly regulated under the Mental Health Act 1983 and practitioners should only administer the treatment when all other options have been exhausted. The Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on the usage of ECT to ensure patients are treated with dignity and respect. The Independent Review of the Mental Health Act made 154 recommendations, including proposing further safeguards on the use of ECT. We have committed to publishing a White Paper which will set out the Government's response to Sir Simon Wessely's Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983 and pave the way for reform of the Act.

**■ England Infected Blood Support Scheme: Wales****Sarah Atherton:**[\[82599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing Barnett Consequentials to Wales for the additional payments offered to victims of the contaminated blood scandal under the England Infected Blood Support Scheme announced in April 2019.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* There are disparities in financial and non-financial support for those infected and affected by the contaminated blood tragedy across the United Kingdom. The Department of Health and Social Care is working with the Cabinet Office, the Treasury and Departments of Health across the UK's devolved administrations to address these disparities.

**■ Health Services: Coronavirus****Derek Twigg:**[\[81543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the current level of restoration of NHS services is as covid-19 restrictions are eased, by region.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* On 31 July, further guidance was issued to local National Health Service providers and commissioners on outlining the next phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 and concurrent non-COVID activity. The

focus is on accelerating the return of non-COVID health services to near-normal levels, including making full use of available capacity between now and winter, whilst also preparing for winter demand pressures. This will be done alongside continued vigilance in light of any further COVID-19 spikes locally and possibly nationally.

Providers, working as local systems, were asked to submit draft plans for how they intend to meet the key actions in the guidance by 1 September, with final plans due by 21 September. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/07/Phase-3-letter-July-31-2020.pdf>

### ■ Intensive Care: Hospital Beds

**Mr David Davis:** [\[81520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the NHS plans to resume the (a) collection and (b) publication of data on critical care bed capacity across the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* NHS England's collection and publication of critical care bed capacity data was paused as part of the initial response to COVID-19. A date to restart collection and publication of this data has not yet been decided.

### ■ McKinsey and Company: Contact Tracing

**Munira Wilson:** [\[75456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the contract with McKinsey for reviewing the NHS test and trace governance structures.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2020]:* The contract published on 29 July 2020 can be found at the following link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/1a720c8a-85fd-4255-85ee-3c891c664bf0>

**Munira Wilson:** [\[75458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much McKinsey will receive for reviewing the NHS test and trace governance structures.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 21 July 2020]:* The company will receive a sum of £563,400 excluding VAT.

### ■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review: Sodium Valproate

**Cat Smith:** [\[82079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 August 2020 to Question 74648 on Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review: Sodium Valproate, what his definition is of in due course.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

As I have stated in my response to Question 74648, the recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully.

**Members: Correspondence****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[81656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 5 June 2020 from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North, on advice to the clinically vulnerable on shielding.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 31 July 2020.

**Mothers: Mental Health****Colleen Fletcher:**[\[81966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what training (a) health visitors, (b) midwives and (c) GPs receive on identifying (a) post-natal depression and (b) other maternal mental health issues.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The Government is committed to ensuring that all healthcare professionals receive the necessary mental health training to meet the current and future needs of patients.

The standard of training for health care professionals is the responsibility of the health care independent statutory regulatory bodies who set the outcome standards expected at undergraduate level and approve courses and Higher Education Institutions to write and teach the curricula content that enables their students to meet the regulators outcome standards.

For midwives, their pre- and post-registration education should enable them to provide prediction, prevention, identification, care and referral for maternal mental health problems.

For general practitioners (GPs), mental health diagnosis and support is a key component of the Royal College of General Practitioners Training Curriculum and a key area where all GPs need to be competent in order to practise independently as family doctors.

**NHS Trusts: Hospital Beds****Derek Twigg:**[\[81542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the level of bed occupancy is in acute NHS Hospital Trusts in England, by (a) Trust and (b) region.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* Bed availability and occupancy rates are collected and published via NHS England. Data are available by trust and by region at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/bed-availability-and-occupancy/>

**■ NHS: Unmanned Air Vehicles****Sir Edward Davey:****[78482]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the progress of trials by NHS Highlands of drones being used to transport medical supplies; and what assessment he has made of the potential for the wider roll-out of that technology across the UK.

**Helen Whately:**

The NHS Long Term Plan is bringing new technologies into the National Health Service to improve patient care and save lives, and we continue to support testing of innovations such as convenient, faster technology to help frontline staff to give people world-leading treatment. This includes supporting NHS staff through the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme, run by the Accelerated Access Collaborative, to develop their own innovative ideas, for example exploring the potential use of autonomous drone delivery systems within healthcare.

**■ Overseas Students: Coronavirus****Wera Hobhouse:****[76088]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of testing newly arrived international students for covid-19.

**Helen Whately:**

The Government continues to consider a range of options to manage the risk of imported cases, including the role COVID-19 virus testing could play as part of measures at the border.

To keep number of transmissions in the United Kingdom as low as possible, and to protect UK residents and international students in the UK, subject to some exemptions international arrivals are required to supply their contact and accommodation information, and self-isolate in their accommodation for 14 days where they have departed from or transited through a non-exempt country in the 14 days before the date of their arrival. It remains the case that we have the capacity to provide free tests to anyone in the UK who is showing symptoms.

## ■ Oximeters: Coronavirus

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[77599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many oximeters have been purchased by NHS England for the treatment of covid-19.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have purchased a total of 324,811 oximeters through the NHS Supply Chain to support blood oxygen monitoring, including identification of 'silent hypoxia' and rapid patient deterioration at home of patients with COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19.

## ■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

**Matt Western:**

[\[76845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of companies that have signed personal protective equipment contracts with his Department that have subsequently had those orders delayed by the NHS; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 2 September 2020]:* The Department does hold the data in the format required. Over 30 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been ordered by the Department from over 175 United Kingdom-based manufacturers and international partners to provide a continuous supply in the coming months. We have a robust process which ensures that orders are of high quality standard, meet commercial due diligence and checked for risk and fraud. All contracts are monitored by the Department for the delivery and safe receipt of the PPE and any compliance issues are followed up.

## ■ Social Distancing: Children

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[82241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has sought guidance from SAGE on changing covid-19 social distancing guidance for children in England.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

*[Holding answer 3 September 2020]:* The Government is committed to the open sharing of the scientific advice guiding our response to COVID-19 where possible.

The scientific papers presented at Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) meetings together with the minutes of each SAGE meeting have been, and will continue to be, released into the public domain as soon as is practicable. The scientific papers and SAGE minutes are available to view at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

**■ Social Services: Coronavirus****Andrew Lewer:** [\[71156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that there is adequate (a) provision of covid-19 testing facilities for (i) care homes and (ii) other social care settings and (b) co-ordination between local authorities and social care providers in preparation for the potential imposition of regional covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

**Helen Whately:**

Following the success of the whole home testing programme, we announced the next stages in our testing strategy on 3 July. This includes regular retesting for care homes and enhanced outbreak testing for care homes.

We will be expanding our retesting service to all care homes from 31 August 2020. This retesting service has been prioritised in care homes for older people and people with dementia, and we aim to reach all of these homes by 7 September 2020. We continue to issue over 50,000 tests a day to care homes across the country, with the majority of these in high priority outbreak areas.

**■ Social Services: Reform****Jon Trickett:** [\[74439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish legislative proposals to reform the social care system.

**Helen Whately:**

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

This does not diminish the need for a long-term plan for social care. Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges that our society faces. There are complex questions to address, to which we want to give our full considerations in light of the current circumstances.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Antisocial Behaviour: West Midlands****Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[77754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of antisocial behaviour have been recorded in (a) Edgbaston constituency, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands in each month in 2020.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects data on the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents recorded by Police Forces. Data is collected on a quarterly basis and is not available for individual months.

During the first quarter of 2020, 7,547 Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents were recorded by the West Midlands Police. The number of Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents recorded between April 2020 and June 2020 is not currently available.

The Home Office only collects data at Police Force Area level and not at lower levels of geography. However, monthly data on incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded by the police at lower levels of geography can be found on the <https://www.police.uk/> website.

**Antisocial Behaviour: Young People****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[81569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what comparative assessment she has made of the number of young people arrested for anti-social behaviour in (a) Preston, (b) Lancashire, and (c) England between April 2020 to July 2020 compared to the same period in each of the last 2 years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not hold the information requested centrally.

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of arrests, including information on the number of arrests of those aged under 18 years old, on an annual basis only. Data are collected at Police Force Area level only, and information on the number of arrests at lower levels of geography are not held.

Data on arrests for the period up to March 2020 are scheduled to be published on 22 October 2020. Data for the period to March 2021 will not be published until 2021.

Data for the period up to March 2019 for both Lancashire and England and Wales can be found in the 'Police Powers and Procedures, England and Wales' statistical bulletin, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019> 9

**Assaults On Police****Andrew Rosindell:****[81607]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect police officers from assault or injury.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Any attack on a police officer is completely unacceptable. Assaults specifically against emergency workers, including the police, are punishable by up to 12 months in prison and could be charged as common assault. The Government's recent consultation seeking views on doubling the maximum sentence for assaults on emergency workers shows our commitment to ensuring these attacks are not

tolerated. We continue to work with the Ministry of Justice to ensure that assaults on police officers are handled with appropriate severity by the whole criminal justice system.

We have also accelerated our work to introduce a Police Covenant, recognising the service and sacrifice of those who work, or have worked, in policing and to deliver the practical support they need. The key areas of focus will be physical protection, health and wellbeing and support for families. We expect to publish our response to the recent public consultation shortly.

The Government is clear that police officers should have the best possible protection when facing the physical violence that is sometimes directed against them. Decisions on the purchase and supply of protective equipment, including Body Armour, are primarily for Chief Officers.

We also welcome the publication of the National Police Chiefs' Council's Officer and Staff Safety Review. We will continue to work closely with policing partners to consider the recommendations in the report.

## ■ Asylum

**Christine Jardine:**

**[82308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) limit the level of turnover of caseworkers in her Department and (b) ensure the effective training of caseworkers.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum Operations have, over the last 18 months increased the number of decision makers and support staff as part of a rolling recruitment campaign, developed a staff retention strategy to ensure Asylum Operations retains its highly skilled asylum decision makers.

The Asylum Operations Training Team ensure the effective training of caseworkers by delivering the Foundation Training Programme to all new asylum decision makers. This intensive five-week course provides staff with training on all aspects of asylum decision making. This course is followed by a period of mentoring to consolidate their learning.

In addition, an Asylum Transformation Programme is in development that will help address attrition alongside seeking to simplify, streamline and digitise processes as part of the plans to speed up Asylum decision making.

**Christine Jardine:**

**[82309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department provides to asylum caseworkers on the extent to which country-of-origin information should be (a) used in interviews and (b) evaluated in claimant decision-making.

**Chris Philp:**

The references to Country of Origin information across Asylum Policy Instructions are numerous.

The majority of the detail on how asylum caseworkers should consider this information, both in interviews and in final decisions, is contained in the Asylum Policy Instruction on Assessing Credibility And Refugee Status.

However, this is an issue which cuts across a number of areas including interviewing, with detail on this contained in the Asylum Interviews guidance, and is also featured in specific pieces of guidance on issues such as gender identity. It also forms part of the Foundation Training Programme for caseworkers.

**Christine Jardine:**

[\[82310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (a) how do asylum caseworkers access country of origin information for asylum seekers; and (b) how often this information is updated.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes Country Policy and Information Notes, which provide country of origin information, and analysis of this information, for use by Home Office decision makers assessing protection and human rights claims. Each Note provides information concerning the situation for a particular group of people in a particular country. They are published on our intranet, the GOV.UK website and are also available through the country information sites [ecoi.net](#) and [Refworld](#).

Our Notes are kept under constant review and updated depending on demand and the situation.

Decision makers also have access to the latest available country information through an information request service for specific enquiries to deal with particular issues raised in individual claims. These are published on our intranet.

## ■ Asylum: Appeals

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[81747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to allow asylum seekers to work after they have been waiting six months for a decision on their case.

**Barbara Keeley:**

[\[81748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to allow asylum seekers to work in roles in addition to those on the Shortage Occupation List.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum seekers can work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months, through no fault of their own. Those allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is published by the Home Office and based on expert advice from the Migration Advisory Committee.

It is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here, who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider

policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue. A review of the policy is ongoing, and we are considering the evidence put forward on the issue.

## ■ Asylum: Deportation

**Philip Davies:** [\[81718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people refused asylum have been deported in each of the last six months.

**Chris Philp:**

*The Home Office publishes data on returns in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on the number of asylum-related returns are published in table Ret\_05 of the [returns summary tables](#).*

*Asylum-related returns relate to cases where there has been an asylum claim at some stage prior to the return. This will include asylum seekers whose asylum claims have been refused, and who have exhausted any rights of appeal, those returned under third country provisions, as well as those granted asylum/protection, but removed for other reasons (such as criminality).*

*The term 'deportations' refers to a legally-defined subset of returns which are enforced either following a criminal conviction or when it is judged that a person's removal from the UK is conducive to the public good. Information on those deported is not separately available and therefore the published statistics refer to all enforced returns.*

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/910114/returns-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910114/returns-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx)

## ■ Asylum: Finance

**Barbara Keeley:** [\[81749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of providing support to asylum seekers who are unable to work because their case has not yet been heard.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office has not made an estimate of this cost.

Asylum seekers can work in the UK if their claim has been outstanding for 12 months, through no fault of their own. Those allowed to work are restricted to jobs on the Shortage Occupation List, which is published by the Home Office and based on expert advice from the Migration Advisory Committee.

It is important to distinguish between those who need protection and those seeking to work here, who can apply for a work visa under the Immigration Rules. Our wider

policy could be undermined if migrants bypassed work visa Rules by lodging unfounded asylum claims here.

As part of the plans to speed up Asylum decision making, over the last 18 months, UK Visas and Immigration have increased the number of Asylum decision makers and support staff as part of a rolling recruitment campaign and mobilised a transformation programme that seeks to simplify, streamline and digitise processes.

**Alex Sobel:**

**[82338]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) provide refugees and asylum seekers with (i) additional financial support and (ii) support with their travel during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) support social distancing within asylum seeker accommodation.

**Chris Philp:**

Refugees are free to take employment and are eligible to apply for the same welfare benefits as British Citizens and other permanent residents of the UK. They do not therefore receive assistance from the Home Office.

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute are provided with free accommodation, with utilities and council tax paid for, as well as free access to the NHS and free access to education for their children. Unless they are in full-board accommodation, they also receive a cash allowances to cover their other essential living needs.

The level of the cash allowance was reviewed earlier in the year, taking account of Covid-19 factors and evidence about a range of living costs, including travel. As a result of that work, the allowance was raised to £39.60 per week from £37.75 per week with effect from 15 June, an increase of around 5%. The increase was significantly higher than the general rate of inflation, which Office for National Statistics data shows was only 0.5% in the 12 months period to May.

Accommodation providers have worked closely with Public Health officials to ensure that all supported asylum seekers receive guidance on social distancing, which is in line with the advice provided to the general public.

The UK has a generous record in supporting asylum seekers. Last year, we made around 20,000 grants of asylum or protection (one of the higher figures in Europe), as well as offered protection to 3,000 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children – the highest number of any country in Europe. In addition, we have directly resettled around 20,000 people from the most dangerous areas of the world (especially Syrians) in the UK over the last 5 years. Finally, we spend around £14 billion per year in Overseas Aid, helping millions of people around the world. This is the highest amount of any country in Europe and we are the only G7 country to meet the 0.7% of GNI Overseas Aid target.

**■ Asylum: Kent**

**Tracey Crouch:** [81796]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are in temporary housing and hotel accommodation in (a) Medway Council and (b) Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council local authority areas.

**Chris Philp:**

The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

The figures include those in temporary and hotel accommodation.

**■ Asylum: West Yorkshire**

**Philip Davies:** [81716]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers are accommodated in (a) Shipley constituency, (b) Bradford district and (c) West Yorkshire.

**Chris Philp:**

The number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

**■ British Nationality**

**Stuart C McDonald:** [81999]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have been deprived of British Citizenship in each year since 2010 by (a) nationality, (b) race, (c) ethnicity and (d) religion.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes data relating to those deprived of British Citizenship.

Figures for conducive deprivation orders, which are made under Section 40(2) of the 1981 British Nationality Act, have been published as part of the HM Government Transparency Report: Disruptive and Investigatory Powers. Four reports have been published to date in 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-government-transparency-report-on-the-use-of-disruptive-and-investigatory-powers>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disruptive-and-investigatory-powers-hm-government-transparency-report>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disruptive-and-investigatory-powers-transparency-report-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transparency-report-disruptive-powers-2018-to-2019>

Section 40(3) of the 1981 British Nationality Act, allows for deprivation of citizenship where fraud, false representation or concealment of material facts have been used to obtain British citizenship. Since February 2020 these figures have been published via the Transparency report on asylum data, which can be found using the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/asylum-transparency-data-february-2020>

Breakdown by nationality, race, ethnicity and religion is not available in a reportable format within cost limits. There will also be instances where a person who has been deprived of British citizenship has not previously declared their race, ethnicity or religion to the Home Office.

### ■ **Burglary: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

**Gareth Davies:**

**[82597]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the use of drone devices on the rate of home burglaries in England; and how many crimes were recorded involving drones in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The long-term trend in burglaries recorded by the police in England has been downward and the number recorded in 2019 was 7% lower than in 2018.

The Home Office does not hold information on the number of recorded crimes, including burglaries, which involved drones.

The Government recognises the particularly invasive nature of burglary and the impact it can have on victims. Whilst police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales showed that burglary had fallen, too many people experience this traumatic crime each year. We are taking a proactive approach to driving down these crimes and have announced a £25m Safer Streets Fund to help prevent these crimes as well as supporting the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers to ensure they have the resources to deal with these crimes when they do occur. We are working to combat burglary in a number of areas, including: making homes more secure, working with the police to examine what more can be done to prevent offenders disposing of stolen goods, and improving the police and wider criminal justice system response.

### ■ **Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Children**

**Sir Edward Davey:**

**[78477]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many children were detained in police cells under the Mental Health Act 1983 (a) since 1 January 2020 and (b) in each of the last five years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This information is already publicly available.

## ■ Crime Prevention: Churches

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[78502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking is taking to prevent crimes against churches.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is committed to cutting crime, and is investing in prevention to ensure that every opportunity is taken to stop unnecessary crimes from happening. The Government is committed to protecting churches from hate crime through the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme. The 2020-21 round launched on 16 June with an uplift to £3.2 million- double the amount awarded last year. Over the last four years we have awarded 183 grants worth approximately 3 million to places of worship across England and Wales - with 76 churches receiving funding.

The Government has an established programme that provides those responsible for crowded places including churches with high quality advice and guidance to ensure appropriate measures may be taken to reduce their vulnerability. Free advice from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) for crowded places includes specific advice for places of worship.

## ■ Crimes of Violence

**Dr Luke Evans:**

[\[82484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of progress made on tackling violent crime since the implementation of the Serious Violence Strategy.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government is committed to delivering on the people's priorities by tackling violent crime and giving the police the resources and powers they need to fight crime. Building on the implementation of the 2018 Serious Violence Strategy, in January this year we announced the biggest funding increase in a decade for the police system and we are recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers over next three years including 6,000 additional officers by the end of financial year 2020/21.

In the 18 Police Force areas worst affected by serious violence, we have invested a total of £176.5 million over 2 years (2019-21) to deliver a whole-systems response. Of this funding £106.5 million has been deployed to enhance the Police's operational response and £70 million has funded the establishment of local, multi-agency Violence Reduction Units to address the drivers of serious violence. Tackling serious violence will be backed with £119 million in 2020-21, which includes £20 million to tackle county lines drug dealing.

In 2018, this Government also invested £200 million in a 10-year Youth Endowment (YEF) Fund to prevent children most at risk, from becoming involved in violent crime.

An extra £5 million has been awarded to the YEF in 2020 to develop a National Centre for Excellence to help transform how the UK tackles serious violence.

It was announced in the Queen's Speech on 19 December that we will be bringing forward legislation that will place new duties on a range of specified agencies across different sectors to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence.

## ■ Detention Centres

**Dr Ben Spencer:**

[\[82488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of detainees remained in immigration detention centres for longer than 28 days; what the longest recorded length of stay is; and what the (a) median and (b) inter-quartile range of length of stay was in the most recent period for which figures are available.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people in detention under immigration powers at 30 June 2020 by current length of detention, are published in Table Det\_03c and Det\_03d of the '[Summary tables](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

In addition, the Home Office published data on people leaving detention in each quarter by length of detention in Table Det\_04b of the '[Summary tables](#)'.

Figures on people in detention in Q3 2020 will be published on 26 November 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

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

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/910647/detention-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910647/detention-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx)

[https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content\\_store\\_document\\_type=upcoming\\_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/910647/detention-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910647/detention-summary-jun-2020-tables.xlsx)

## ■ Domestic Abuse and Stalking: Reoffenders

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[82538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of tracking and routinely supervising repeat offenders of stalking and domestic abuse on a national basis.

**Victoria Atkins:**

People who have been convicted of one of the offences specified in Schedule 15 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003, including stalking involving fear of violence or serious alarm or distress, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, and wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and who have been sentenced to 12 months or more of imprisonment or youth detention or who have been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, are automatically managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Of those people, those who pose a higher risk of harm - where formal multi-agency meetings are held to inform the shared Risk Management Plan - are included on the ViSOR Dangerous Persons Database.

People who do not meet those criteria, but who have been convicted or cautioned for, or reprimanded or warned about, an offence which indicates that they pose a risk of serious harm to the public, and who are considered by the MAPPA agencies to require the active involvement of several agencies via regular multi-agency public protection meetings, are also managed under MAPPA and included on ViSOR. Additionally, a person who has not been convicted of an offence, but whose behaviour gives reasonable grounds for believing that there is a likelihood of them committing an offence which will cause serious harm (known as a Potentially Dangerous Person), may also be included on ViSOR.

The College of Policing has issued guidance to police forces on the 'Identification, assessment and management of serial or potentially dangerous domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators'. The key principles set out that forces should have processes in place to identify serial or potentially dangerous domestic abuse or stalking perpetrators and ensure that information about the perpetrator is recorded on the Police National Computer, the Police National Database or ViSOR as appropriate.

**■ Domestic Abuse: Victims****Janet Daby:****[82363]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what languages have been used in public communications to raise awareness of the support available for victims of domestic abuse as part of the You are not alone campaign.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Government launched the #YouAreNotAlone awareness raising campaign to signpost support available to victims of domestic abuse during lockdown. Translated radio adverts ran in Hindi, Polish and Punjabi and campaign materials have been translated into Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu and Welsh. Translated domestic abuse guidance is also available in these languages at [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://gov.uk/domestic-abuse).

## ■ Dual Nationality

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[82444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of passport applicants, have a dual nationality and use a name different in their application for a British passport than they use in their other passport.

**Chris Philp:**

I refer to the previous response provided by Her Majesty's Passport Office on 29 October 2015 to PQ 13210 regarding information on dual nationality.

No statistical information is available showing whether British citizens hold another citizenship.

## ■ Hezbollah: Fundraising

**Nicola Richards:**

[\[82637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of Hezbollah's ability to raise funds within the UK.

**James Brokenshire:**

The Government does not comment on intelligence matters.

Hizballah is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK and is designated under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing Act 2010.

## ■ Immigrants: Finance

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[78766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of Government financial support for (a) people with no recourse to public funds and (b) local authorities providing support to those people.

**Chris Philp:**

The no recourse to public funds (NRPF) policy is based on the principle that migrants coming to the UK are expected to maintain and support themselves and their families without posing a burden on the UK's welfare system. However, there are existing safeguards and exceptions in place for those in need, for example refugees and those on human rights routes who would otherwise be destitute. The Government has also taken steps to support those in need, including those subject to NRPF, through the current pandemic.

The assistance being given under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme are not classed as public funds and are available to all those who are legally working or self-employed respectively, including those with NRPF status and those on zero-hour contracts. Statutory sick pay and some other work-related benefits, such as contributory employment and support

allowance, are also not classed as public funds and so are also available to individuals with NRPF who are eligible.

Local authorities are also able to help. The Government has provided £4.3 billion of funding to local authorities in England to respond to spending pressures they are facing, including supporting those with no recourse to public funds where there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution. Funding has also been allocated to the Devolved Administrations under the Barnett Formula.

### ■ Immigrants: Surcharges

**Tim Farron:** [\[77549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the cost to the public purse has been of processing refunds in relation to the immigration health surcharge paid on immigration applications by (a) NHS workers and (b) health and social care staff since 21 May 2020.

**Kevin Foster:**

The information requested is not held in a reportable format and could therefore only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**Tim Farron:** [\[78604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what has been the (a) shortest, (b) longest and (c) average time taken by her Department to process a refund of the NHS immigration health surcharge.

**Kevin Foster:**

The information requested is not held in a reportable format and could therefore only be provided at disproportionate cost.

### ■ Immigration

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[84331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the earliest date is for applications to be made under the new points based immigration system.

**Kevin Foster:**

The new UK's Points-Based System will be operating from 1 January 2021.

We will open key routes from Autumn 2020, so people can start to apply ahead of the new system taking effect in January 2021.

### ■ Investigatory Powers Commissioner

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[83900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 to allow temporary judicial commissioners (JCs) to be appointed at the request of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, in the event that there are insufficient JCs available to operate the system under the Investigatory Powers

Act 2016, how many JCs have been appointed in accordance with those provisions since the 2020 Act came into force.

**James Brokenshire:**

Ten temporary Judicial Commissioners have been appointed by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner under the Coronavirus Act.

They were appointed for terms of six months.

Details of the temporary Judicial Commissioners can be found on the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office website.

In addition, the Prime Minister appointed Lord Justice Fulford, the former Investigatory Powers Commissioner, as a Judicial Commissioner to assist during this period.

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[83901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 to allow the Home Secretary to vary the time allowed for urgent warrants to be reviewed at the request of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, how many times have those powers been used since the 2020 Act came into force.

**James Brokenshire:**

It was important to ensure that urgent warrants – which are used in the most pressing of circumstances – did not fall away due to a lack of available Judicial Commissioners. While the appointment of temporary Judicial Commissioners went a long way to make this scenario less likely, it could not mitigate every situation whereby Covid-19 may delay Judicial Commissioner approval.

We expect IPCO to publish full statistics on the use of the amended urgent warrant procedure in their 2020 Annual Report.

■ **Madeleine McCann**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[77616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with representatives from the Portuguese police on the disappearance of Madeline McCann.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Secretary has had no discussions with representatives of the Portuguese police concerning Operation Grange, the investigation into the disappearance of Madeleine McCann.

Police forces are independent of Government, its Ministers and officials and operational decisions relating to investigations, including liaison with international counterparts, are for forces to make.

## ■ Nitrous Oxide: Regulation

**Nicola Richards:**

[\[82634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to regulate the market for nitrous oxide to restrict access for people wishing to use it as a psychoactive drug.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government takes the supply of substances for their psychoactive effect very seriously. There are legitimate uses for nitrous oxide, such as in medicine, dentistry and as a propellant for whipped cream canisters, but those who supply nitrous oxide for its recreational use, or who are reckless as to whether it is used for its psychoactive effect, will be subject to an offence under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. This includes a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment.

The Government has published guidance for retailers to satisfy themselves that they comply with the law, available on the gov.uk website. The guidance recommends that retailers, including those operating online, should pay particular attention to the potential for abuse of nitrous oxide, especially where customers seek to buy in bulk or large volumes.

We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems in place to deal with harmful content on their internet services and keep users safe. Illegal and harmful activity online such as the supply of psychoactive substances for their psychoactive effect will fall within the scope of the planned legislation.

The Government published its initial response to the consultation on the Online Harms White Paper in February, giving more detail on the policy position and naming Ofcom as the Government's preferred independent Online Harms regulator. We will publish a full response to the consultation in the coming months and aim to bring legislation before Parliament this session.

## ■ Organised Crime: Drugs

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[78501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to dismantle the operations of county lines drug gangs.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This Government is determined to crack down on the county lines gangs who are exploiting our children and have a devastating impact on our communities.

That is why we are investing £25m in our county lines programme to boost law enforcement efforts to tackle these ruthless gangs. Our overall package launched in October last year and includes: expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre, increased disruption on the rail networks by the British Transport Police's County Lines Taskforce, operational activity against high harm lines in the three

major exporting force areas (the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside, West Midlands), investment in new technology, and increased support for victims.

Our investment is already delivering results; between November 2019 and March 2020, the Metropolitan Police, Merseyside, West Midlands and the British Transport Police made over 650 arrests, closed nearly 140 deal lines, seized cash and drugs with a total value of over £3 million, made over 100 weapons seizures, and safeguarded a number of individuals, including 140 children.

## ■ Police: Schools

**Kate Green:**

[\[81876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance has been issued to police forces on the carrying and use of tasers in schools by schools-based police officers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government does not issue specific guidance on the use of police equipment in schools. This is an operational matter for Chief officers to determine. Officers must pass a comprehensive training programme before they can carry Tasers.

**Kate Green:**

[\[81877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many schools-based police officers are (a) authorised to carry tasers and (b) permitted to carry tasers in schools in each police force in England.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office does not record the number of Taser devices or the number of officers authorised to carry Tasers. This is an operational matter for Chief Officers, and it is for them to determine the number of devices and specially trained officers needed based on their force assessment of threat and risk. Officers must pass a comprehensive training programme before they can carry Tasers.

## ■ Public Order: Coronavirus

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[78500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to maintain public order during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office has been working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council throughout the Covid-19 crisis, to ensure they have sufficient resourcing and capabilities to manage public order, are able to provide required support for frontline police officers and to back the police when it comes to law enforcement.

Significant work has also been undertaken by National Policing Leads to prepare for public disorder whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain in place. We fully back the police in taking a firm stance against those who significantly disrupt the lives of others with

unlawful behaviour and the Home Office will continue to work closely with them on this.

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Philip Davies:** [\[78587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of assaults on shop workers in each of the last three years.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Home Office collects data relating to assaults and threats against retail staff via the 'Commercial Victimization Survey' (CVS). However, the latest estimates are from the 2018 CVS (available in the link below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-against-businesses-findings-from-the-2018-commercial-victimisation-survey>.

The next survey will be conducted in early 2021 with results available later in that year.

## ■ Slavery

**Sarah Champion:** [\[83823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she will conduct an updated national assessment of the scale of modern slavery in Britain, to include the (a) economic and (b) social cost of modern slavery; and if she will take steps to formulate an updated strategy to tackle it.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The UK Government is committed to tackling the heinous crime of modern slavery and bringing those individuals responsible to justice. Our response is underpinned by the [Modern Slavery Strategy 2014](#) and the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), the first legislation of its kind in the world.

The Government is identifying more victims of modern slavery and doing more to bring perpetrators to justice than ever before. In 2019, the Government's manifesto included a commitment to continue the campaign to eradicate the scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking. In May 2020, at the Prime Minister's Virtual Summit on Hidden Harms, the Government reiterated the absolute priority that we place on preventing and protecting those at risk from hidden harms, including modern slavery.

It is crucial that the Government's policy and operational response to modern slavery is underpinned by robust evidence and we are committed to improving our understanding of this complex crime. In 2018 the Home Office published a report on the [economic and social costs of modern slavery](#) and in July 2019, the Government announced a £10 million investment to create a new Policy and Evidence Centre for Modern Slavery and Human Rights. As noted by the Office for National Statistics in their March 2020 report the hidden nature of this crime makes providing an accurate measure of its scale difficult. However, we will continue working with the Centre and



**■ Taxis: Standards****John Spellar:** [\[78494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she had with the Secretary of State for Transport prior to the announcement on changes to the statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards on 21 July 2020.

**John Spellar:** [\[78495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she had with the Secretary of State for Transport before that Department's announcement on changes to regulations on criminal record checks for taxi drivers.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The new standards address a number of concerns raised in investigations into child sexual exploitation and abuse, including the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, about safeguarding in taxis and private hire vehicles. The Home Secretary has made clear that such failures must never be repeated.

The Department for Transport has worked with Home Office ministers and officials to develop the changes.

**■ UK Visas and Immigration: Sopra Steria****Tommy Sheppard:** [\[83856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to reports of a shortage of free appointments for visa applicants to register their biometric data, what recent discussions she has had with Sopra Steria on the availability of those appointments.

**Kevin Foster:**

Sopra Steria Ltd (SSL) are a commercial partner who run the UK Visa and Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS) on behalf of UKVI. UKVI is working closely with SSL to ensure a sufficient level of appointments is available.

SSL monitor UKVCAS performance against set key performance indicators (KPIs) within the contract, with the Home Office maintaining oversight to ensure Sopra Steria Ltd adhere to contractual requirements.

**■ Undocumented Migrants: English Channel****Sir John Hayes:** [\[81518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of section 31 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 on the rate of illegal crossings of the English Channel.

**Chris Philp:**

Section 31 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 sets out the defences available to a refugee if charged with certain offences connected to entering the UK, and is in accordance with the United Kingdom's obligations under the Refugee Convention.

The Home Secretary has been clear that she will explore all options to review the UK immigration system in order to deter people from making dangerous journeys such as crossing the Channel, and promptly return those who have no right to be in the UK.

## ■ Visas: Shipping

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[82220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect that different visa arrangements for EU citizens visiting the UK, and UK citizens visiting the EU after the transition period will have on offshore sailors.

**Kevin Foster:**

From 1 January 2021, we will introduce the UK's points-based system.

EU citizens wishing to work in the UK or within the UK's territorial waters will need to apply for a visa under the new system.

## ■ Windrush Generation: Compensation

**Stuart Anderson:**

[82410]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on compensating victims of the Windrush scandal; and what the deadline is for applications to the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

**Priti Patel:**

The latest set of data relating to the Windrush Compensation Scheme (WCS) was published on 27 August and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/windrush-compensation-scheme-data-august-2020>. This covers data up until the end of July 2020.

These show a clear increasing trajectory of payments: £1,053,223 was paid up to 31 July 2020, of which £298,112 was paid in the most recent month.

We are processing claims and awarding compensation as quickly as possible. The first payment was made just four months after the scheme was launched and we are making interim payments where parts of a claim can be resolved more easily than others.

However, each person's claim is deeply personal and requires detailed consideration to understand their individual circumstances and experiences. Some individuals' experiences are more complex than others and it is right we take the time to ensure these are considered carefully. We have also put people at the heart of the Scheme. We want each person to get the maximum compensation to which they are entitled, and we will work with individuals to support them in this. This holistic approach necessarily takes time but ultimately is beneficial to individuals.

In February this year we extended the duration of the Windrush Compensation Scheme by two years. The scheme will now be open for claims until April 2023.

**Carol Monaghan:**

[\[83855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons the Loss of Access to Benefits award under the Windrush Compensation Scheme does not include circumstances where decisions by her Department have made an applicant ineligible for an award from the Department for Work and Pensions.

**Priti Patel:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for determining eligibility for benefits, including decisions on whether to reinstate benefits or recompense for lost benefits. The Windrush Compensation Scheme will not make any payment in relation to DWP administered benefits but will work with DWP in order to facilitate the processing of claims in accordance with their usual rules. To the end of March, the Vulnerable Persons Team have made 364 referrals to DWP in relation to fresh claims and reinstatement of benefits.

#### ■ **Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre**

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

[\[82134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) men and (b) women are detained in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

[\[82135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people are detained in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre.

**Nick Thomas-Symonds:**

[\[82136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) people, (b) men and (c) women were detained in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in each month from 1 July 2019.

**Chris Philp:**

The Home Office publishes statistics on people entering detention in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'. Data on people entering detention under immigration powers by place of detention and sex, are published in Table Det\_D01 and on people in detention at the last day of each quarter in Table Det\_D02 of the '[immigration detention detailed datasets](#)'. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

Figures on people entering detention in Q3 2020 will be published on 26 November 2020. Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

The figures published in Det\_D01 relate to the first place of detention. If an individual enters immigration detention in another part of the detention estate, or in prison before being moved to Yarl's Wood, they will be recorded under that centre.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/returns-and-detention-datasets#immigration-detention>

[https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content\\_store\\_document\\_type=upcoming\\_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&organisations%5B%5D=home-office&order=release-date-oldest)

## HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### ■ Building Safety Fund: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [R] [77748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many applications to the Building Safety Fund have (a) been submitted and (b) were successful in relation to residential buildings in (i) Edgbaston constituency, (ii) Birmingham and (iii) the West Midlands.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Registration for the Building Safety Fund opened on the 1 of June and closed on 31 July. As explained in the application guidance, published on 31 July, buildings that registered for the fund that are found to be eligible will be invited to complete the application process. We are currently reviewing registrations to the Building Safety Fund and verifying the registration data. We will publish registration statistics shortly.

### ■ Buildings: Insulation

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [R] [77747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he made of the number of buildings in (a) Edgbaston constituency, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands which require remedial work to remove flammable cladding.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The number of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings with ACM cladding materials unlikely to meet building regulations, and their remediation progress, is available in the Building Safety Programme's monthly data release here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-june-2020>. This includes information specifically for the local authority of Birmingham, and other local authorities in the West Midlands, in Appendix 2. Information by constituency is not available due to the higher risk of identification of particular buildings.

### ■ English Language: Education

**Catherine West:** [84316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of amending his Department's

expanded retail relief guidance for 2020-21 to enable further support for English Language schools.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

My Department published guidance on the expanded retail discount on 25 March 2020. The guidance states that eligible properties are those wholly or mainly used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; those used by visiting members of the public for assembly and leisure; or hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to decide, having regard to the guidance, whether English language schools fall within these categories. The Government has no plans to amend the guidance.

■ **Evictions: Coronavirus**

**Mick Whitley:**

[\[83961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the suspension on evictions beyond 20 September 2020.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Our primary consideration remains, as it has been throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, to protect public health and ensure public services can provide support to those who need it. The stay on possession proceedings has been extended until 20 September 2020, meaning that in total no tenant can have been legally evicted for six months at the height of the pandemic.

Legislation has been introduced that means, from 29 August 2020, landlords must give tenants six months' notice before they can evict in most circumstances, apart from the most egregious cases such as incidents of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse perpetrators. This will be in force until 31 March 2021.

When courts do resume possession hearings they will carefully prioritise the most egregious cases, ensuring landlords are able to advance cases such as those involving anti-social behaviour and other serious cases. Case listing, including prioritisation, in court is a judicial function and we are working with the judiciary through the Master of the Rolls' Working Group on possession proceedings to finalise the categories of serious cases that will be prioritised when hearings resume.

Our measures strike a good balance by easing the path to the opening of the courts for the most critical cases while keeping the public safe over winter. We will keep these measures under review and decisions will continue to be guided by the latest public health advice.

■ **Flats: Insulation**

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[78886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for the removal of any unsafe cladding from 84 Stainsby Road, London, E14 6JD.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department cannot provide information regarding individual buildings. Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner, and we expect remedial works to progress at pace. Remediation works to remove and replace unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding systems have either completed or started on over 70 per cent of all identified high rise residential buildings. We have made clear that we expect the rest to have started work on site before the end of the year and for all to have completed by the end of 2021.

The Government has recognised that finance can be a barrier to remediation and has made significant funds available to speed up the remediation of buildings while protecting leaseholders from significant costs. For the remediation of unsafe non-ACM cladding we have made £1 billion available to fund the removal of unsafe non-ACM cladding in 2020/21. This is in addition to the £600 million made available already to ensure the remediation of unsafe ACM cladding. Government funding is not and should not be the only source of funds and for over half of private residential buildings with ACM claddings, the ACM remediation is being funded from other sources without falling to leaseholders to pay.

**■ High Rise Flats: Insulation****Sir John Hayes:**[\[78498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to incentivise the removal of dangerous materials from high-rise buildings.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer of Question UIN 74552, answered on 24 July.

**Apsana Begum:**[\[78887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average (a) weekly and (b) monthly cost to leaseholders in buildings in Poplar and Limehouse with unsafe cladding systems of (i) temporary safety measures, (ii) legal fees, (iii) insurance premiums and (iv) other ancillary fees related to fire safety.

**Christopher Pincher:**

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 77746, answered on 1 September.

**Apsana Begum:**[\[78888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to people living in residential blocks with prohibited aluminium composite material cladding who wish to sell their property in Poplar and Limehouse constituency.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has made £600 million of funding available for the removal of unsafe aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding on high-rise residential buildings, protecting leaseholders from remediation costs, and is also providing additional project management support for remediation. This funding should mean that banks and mortgage lenders have certainty that remediation costs for these buildings will be paid for. The Independent Expert Advisory Panel has provided clear advice to building owners who should take steps to remove unsafe ACM cladding regardless of height. Building owners should be as transparent as possible to enable mortgage lenders and potential buyers to make an informed decision.

**Mike Amesbury:**[\[84342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the External Wall System (EWS) form; what the average length of time to complete the EWS1 process is; and what progress he has made in improving External Wall System review process.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 form is not a Government regulatory or legal requirement. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) designed and implemented the form in conjunction with mortgage lenders. RICS is currently reviewing the form and its operation.

**Florence Eshalomi:**[\[84377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of supporting building owners to fund remedial works (a) for buildings of all heights and (b) beyond those needed to external wall systems.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has made £1 billion available to fund the removal of unsafe non-Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding. This is in addition to the £600 million made available already to ensure the remediation of the highest risk ACM cladding

The Government's decision to place the scope of the Building Safety Fund at external wall systems, and buildings over 18m, reflects the exceptional fire risk that certain cladding products pose at that height, but also because unsafe cladding acts as an accelerant to fire spread

Our guidance is clear that it remains building owners' responsibility to address unsafe cladding on buildings of all heights. We have provided advice from the Expert Panel on the measures building owners should take to ensure their buildings are safe

We recognise that in many cases, leasehold agreements will allow building owners or their managing agents to pass remediation costs on to leasehold owners of individual flats. It is unacceptable for leaseholders to have to worry about the cost of fixing historic safety defects in their buildings that they didn't cause

The Government is determined to remove barriers to fixing historic defects and identify financing solutions that protect leaseholders from unaffordable costs and we will provide an update when the draft Building Safety Bill returns to Parliament.

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[84378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to support leaseholders who experience delays in receiving an EWS1 form as a result of the low risk profile of their property.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The EWS1 form was introduced by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) to assist in valuation of high-rise residential buildings for mortgage purposes. The Department does not support a blanket approach in EWS1 requests for lower rise properties and is encouraging mortgage lenders to accept other equivalent evidence from building owners for valuation purposes.

**Florence Eshalomi:**

[\[84379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to increase capacity among the competent professionals needed to (a) sign EWS1 forms and (b) carry out remediation works.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Building owners must take swift action to remediate their buildings. The Department is supporting industry in responding to this challenge including consideration of ways to address capacity issues across the sector.

## ■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[78855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has in place to provide for additional home insulations to meet the target for net zero emissions by 2050.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is committed to meeting its target of net zero emissions by 2050 with homes switching to low carbon heating and better energy efficiency playing an important part. It continues to be the Government's ambition to improve as many homes as possible to EPC C by 2035

Our Heat and Buildings Strategy, to be published in due course, will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings.

The Government recently announced the £2 billion 'Green Homes Grant', under which homeowners and landlords in England can apply for a voucher to fund at least two thirds of the cost of hiring tradespeople to upgrade the energy performance of their homes. This could support more than 100,000 green jobs, upgrade more than 600,000 homes across the country, and save households hundreds of pounds a year on their energy bills.

**■ Housing: Construction**

**Helen Hayes:** [77725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the quality of new housing units created through permitted development rights.

**Christopher Pincher:**

In response to concerns raised in respect of the quality of some of the homes delivered through permitted development rights we now require adequate natural light to be provided in habitable rooms. All homes built under permitted development rights are required to meet Building Regulations.

The independent research informing our review has been published and is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quality-standard-of-homes-delivered-through-change-of-use-permitted-development-rights>

**Sir John Hayes:** [78497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support he is providing to small firms of house builders.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government recognises the important role that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play in delivering new housing across this country. We are committed to supporting SMEs and enabling them to play a crucial role in increasing housing supply and diversifying the market. We have provided financial assistance to SMEs via the Home Building Fund and an SME-focused guarantee scheme (the £1 billion ENABLE Build scheme). On 30 June we announced an additional £450 million, increasing the Home Building Fund total to £5 billion. £3 billion of this funding will be targeted as short-term development loans to SMEs, custom builders and innovators, delivering at least 60,000 homes by 2022/23. The ENABLE Build scheme will further support firms in accessing finance to progress new developments.

**■ Housing: Coronavirus**

**Helen Hayes:** [77715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure the provision of accessible housing for older and disabled people as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Helen Hayes:** [77716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his timeframe is for the commencement of consultation on mandating optional access standards.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We will consult shortly on accessible housing suitable for older and disabled people. This consultation will consider making higher accessibility standards mandatory,

recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people, and will ask for views on our framework for providing accessible housing.

## ■ **Housing: Disability**

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[77714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Government's press release of 20 June 2020, entitled Build build build: Prime Minister announces New Deal for Britain, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of proposed changes to permitted development rights on the accessibility of those properties for disabled people.

**Christopher Pincher:**

All works are required to meet the appropriate national building regulations set out in Approved Document Part M (Access to and use of buildings) whether the permission for the additional homes is granted via a planning application or a permitted development right.

Local planning authorities should be planning to meet the need for housing in their area, including those for people with a disability, irrespective of these additional homes from upward extensions.

## ■ **Leasehold**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[84259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect on existing leaseholders since the implementation of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (S.I. 2020, No. 632).

**Christopher Pincher:**

An Impact Assessment has been published and is available alongside the regulations. This considers the impact on leaseholders

## ■ **Local Government**

**Andrew Jones:**

[\[78626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his Department considers the minimum population size to be for a newly-established unitary authority for that authority to achieve (a) value for money and (b) quality service delivery.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper to be published this Autumn will set out our transformative plans for economic recovery and renewal, and for levelling up opportunity, prosperity, and well-being across the country. Whilst traditionally various population ranges for unitary councils have been referred to, where a unitary council is proposed its particular circumstances need to be considered when assessing whether its population would be appropriate.

**Local Government Finance: Coronavirus****Colleen Fletcher:****[84272]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of how much each local council has (a) spent on dealing with the effect of the covid-19 outbreak and (b) lost in revenue during that outbreak.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

We have now carried out four rounds of the Covid-19 financial monitoring survey and have received data from all local authorities. The vast majority (96 per cent) of councils surveyed have responded to all four rounds, with the remainder having submitted returns in three of the four rounds, which means that we have a fully representative dataset from which to inform our understanding of councils' evolving financial situations as they continue to respond to the pandemic.

In the fourth round of the survey, local authorities estimated they faced £2.5 billion in additional expenditure pressures and income loss of £3.6 billion from March to the end of July. On 19 August, we published a summary of the results of the fourth round. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-covid-19-financial-impact-monitoring-information>. We will publish the results from Round 5 of the survey in due course. We are committed to being transparent about the pressures councils are under, which is why we have published the breakdown of results.

We have provided councils with an unprecedented package of support, allocating £4.3 billion of support for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund. This direct financial support the Government has provided is part of comprehensive package of support which includes cashflow measures, support for the homeless, and for bus and tram services – not to mention grants and business rates reliefs for businesses. In total, the Government has committed almost £28 billion to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities

The Government has also confirmed that it will extend the period over which councils must manage shortfalls in local tax income relating to 2020-21, from 1 to 3 years. This will ease immediate pressures on authorities when budget setting for 2021-22, protecting their ability to deliver essential local services. We will announce further details of how it will also support local authorities to manage tax losses at the comprehensive spending review later in the year.

**Colleen Fletcher:****[84273]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding his Department has provided to each local authority to help them deal with the effect of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

We have provided councils with an unprecedented package of support, allocating £4.3 billion of support for spending pressures, including £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced

grants and the £600 million Infection Control Fund. This direct financial support the Government has provided is part of comprehensive package of support which includes cashflow measures, support for the homeless, and for bus and tram services – not to mention grants and business rates reliefs for businesses. In total, the Government has committed almost £28 billion to local areas to support councils, businesses and communities. Full information on the amount each council has received from the £3.7 billion of un-ringfenced grants, as well as other measures, can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-emergency-funding-for-local-government> The Government has also introduced a co-payment scheme to compensate local councils for irrecoverable and unavoidable losses from sales, fees and charges income generated in the delivery of services, in the financial year 2020/21. Councils will absorb the first 5 per cent of all relevant, irrecoverable losses compared to budgets, with the Government compensating councils for 75p in every pound of loss thereafter.

The Government has also confirmed that it will extend the period over which councils must manage shortfalls in local tax income relating to 2020-21, from 1 to 3 years. This will ease immediate pressures on authorities when budget setting for 2021-22, protecting their ability to deliver essential local services. We will announce further details of how it will also support local authorities to manage tax losses at the comprehensive spending review later in the year.

## ■ Markets: Coronavirus

**Anne Marie Morris:**

**[84261]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to support indoor market retailers during the economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

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

Eligible market stalls with a rateable value could also benefit from flat rate payments of £10,000 under the grant scheme for the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. Moreover, in recognition that some market traders were excluded from this grant fund because of the way they interact with the business rates system, the Government encouraged local authorities to include these businesses as a priority group for the Discretionary Grant Fund

In terms of rent assistance, the Government encourages tenants to continue to pay their rent in full where they are in a position to do so, although we recognise that

others may not be in this position. We welcome the fact that many local authorities and other operators have been able to be flexible in their approach and negotiate suitable arrangements including rent concessions for a significant number of market traders in support of the industry, recognising the financial strain the pandemic has placed on their finances.

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:** [\[77542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to write to McComb Students to encourage that company to respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 20 April 2020.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We encourage all accommodation providers to communicate clearly with students. However, the Department is unable to intervene in individual cases of correspondence.

#### ■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Coronavirus**

**Jon Trickett:** [\[77519\]](#)

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

**Luke Hall:**

My officials are working to safely reopen all of our estate so that staff who want to work from an office can do so. We have already welcomed back a small number of staff who asked to attend an office for wellbeing reasons or to undertake work that requires this, but none have been required to do so.

#### ■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Property Development**

**Steve Reed:** [\[83824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have had with commercial property companies since 1 March 2020.

**Luke Hall:**

Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on Gov.uk.

#### ■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Training**

**Neil O'Brien:** [\[77795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many staff in his Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

**Luke Hall:**

The data provided below is for MHCLG central department staff only. It does not include staff from executive agencies and arms' length bodies. It covers the period from 1 April 2018 to 18 August 2020. All data has been extracted from the Civil Service Learning (CSL) website and the Learning Platform for Government (LPG), which do not allow for the extraction of data from before 1 April 2018. Learning completion data covering the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018 is not held internally by MHCLG.

The figures outlined below are inclusive of any staff who have undertaken training on unconscious bias in the relevant period. Where staff have completed two or more courses on unconscious bias, they have only been included in the overall figure once. Please note that due to the way in which data is collated by the CSL website, the data below is inclusive of staff currently employed by MHCLG, but who completed training whilst employed by another government department

1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

573 Staff

1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

542 Staff

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020

78 staff

**Public Lavatories: Coronavirus****Tim Farron:**[\[77552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to issue updated guidance to local authorities on the reopening of public toilets as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

The Government has made clear through Covid-19 guidance, which is updated regularly, that public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19. This includes, for example, guidance on *Safer Public Places - Urban Centres and Green Spaces* and *Working safely during Coronavirus*.

To help everyone maintain good hygiene, consideration should be given to configuration of toilets facilities to ensure they are kept clean, with social distancing achieved as far as possible and with best practice handwashing followed.

**Second Homes: Council Tax****Ben Lake:**[\[84333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of changing the tax regulations which

allow second home owners to avoid paying full council tax by registering their properties as holiday lets.

**Mr Simon Clarke:**

Council tax is a devolved matter and the Welsh Government is responsible for the relevant legislation in Wales.

In England, a property may be registered as a holiday let – and therefore assessed for business rates rather than council tax – only if it is available for short-term let for 140 days or more a year.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has consulted on the criteria under which a holiday let is liable for business rates rather than council tax in England and is currently considering responses to that consultation.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### ■ A14: Repairs and Maintenance

**Dr Dan Poulter:**

[\[84188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78611, if he will make an assessment of the strategic importance of upgrading the A14 in Suffolk to (a) enhance the route for transport between the port of Felixstowe and the areas incorporating the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse schemes and (b) contribute to the delivery of the UK's (i) economic and (ii) trade strategies after the end of the transition period.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department for International Trade does not currently have any plans to undertake any such assessment.

### ■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[82518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will suspend arms exports to Saudi Arabia.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

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 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.

**■ Board of Trade****Chris Bryant:**[\[83674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish the list of (a) members of and (b) advisers to the Board of Trade.

**Graham Stuart:**

The list of Advisers to the Board of Trade is available on GOV.UK. The President of the Board of Trade is my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade.

The advisers are:

- Deputy President, Marcus Fysh MP
- Secretary of State for Scotland
- Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
- Secretary of State for Wales
- Minister for Trade Policy
- Minister for Investment
- Minister for Exports
- Minister for International Trade
- The Hon Tony Abbott AC
- Karen Betts
- Anne Boden MBE
- Daniel Hannan
- Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt
- Emma Howard Boyd
- Michael Liebreich
- Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of the City of London, William Russell
- Dr Linda Yueh

**Chris Bryant:**[\[83675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what criteria she uses in the appointment of (a) members of and (c) advisers to the Board of Trade.

**Graham Stuart:**

Permanent members of the UK Board of Trade have to be members of the Privy Council. The President of the Board of Trade is my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade.

Advisers to the UK Board of Trade are appointed through the Direct Ministerial Appointment process, following Cabinet Office Propriety & Ethics guidelines. This

means that individuals are appointed at the discretion of the Secretary of State. The roles are taken on a voluntary basis and are not remunerated.

### ■ Cane Sugar: Import Duties

**Daniel Zeichner:** [\[81975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the 260,000 tonnes Autonomous Tariff Quota (ATQ) for raw cane sugar included in the Government's UK Global Tariff scheme is intended to balance support for UK producers and to maintain preferential trade with developing countries; and how Department plans to enable the ATQ to achieve that.

**Greg Hands:**

As announced as part of the UK Global Tariff (UKGT), the Government has sought a balance between the interests of domestic production and processing and developing country preferences. To achieve this balance, the UKGT retains tariffs on sugar products, while opening a new Autonomous Tariff Quota (ATQ) of 260,000 tonnes that will apply from 1 January 2021, for 12 months, with an in-quota rate of 0.00%. This will ensure that supply is maintained while protecting developing country preferences. We also committed to reviewing this ATQ and we will do so in due course.

### ■ Ceramics: Export Duties

**Jonathan Gullis:** [\[82554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps she has taken to reduce tariffs on British ceramic exports.

**Greg Hands:**

When exporting products, such as ceramics, to a third country, tariffs will depend on the third country's own tariff schedule and whether the UK has a trade agreement in place with them.

We are seeking to secure Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with global trading partners, such as Japan, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand which will open new markets for UK businesses. This is part of our wider ambition for 80% of UK trade to be covered by FTAs within three years.

### ■ Ceramics: Trade Agreements

**Jonathan Gullis:** [\[82556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to engage with ceramic businesses as part of negotiating free trade agreements.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The Department will continue to speak regularly with the ceramics industry, so that the new Free Trade Agreements we are seeking with trading partners such as the US, Japan and Australia and New Zealand work for British businesses.

Our new Trade Advisory Groups (TAGs), including a dedicated “British Manufactured and Consumer Goods TAG”, support our engagement with businesses across the whole of the British economy. Businesses’ expertise and advice will be critical to helping our negotiators deliver key industry asks that benefit every corner of our country, including tariffs on products like ceramics.

The ceramics industry has emphasised the market access opportunities that exist in the US ceramics market, specifically in kitchenware and tableware. High tariffs there, of up to 28%, are currently a significant trade barrier.

## ■ **Clothing: Bangladesh**

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[81493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 63203 on clothing: Bangladesh, what further discussions she has had since 21 May 2020 with UK retailers on payments to garment manufacturers in Bangladesh for products supplied during the covid-19 pandemic; and if she will make a statement.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

My Department continues to work across HM Government and with British retailers on this important issue. We have been encouraging companies to honour existing orders, prioritising the labour portion of cost of goods to help protect workers’ incomes. We work with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and British garment retailers to combat payment issues through a regular working group too. Moreover, FCDO has recently launched the Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility, which will enable vulnerable garment workers in Bangladesh to recover from – and remain resilient to – the economic and social impacts of COVID-19.

## ■ **Department for International Trade: Jingo Juice**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[78560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what marketing and media services her Department procured from Jingo Juice Ltd T/A Marshmallow Laser Feast, paid for on 3 June 2019.

**Greg Hands:**

The Department used Jingo Juice Ltd trading as Marshmallow Laser Feast (MLF) to deliver a ‘virtual reality’ experience for our Designing Our Future trade promotion event in New York.

The event, held on 2-4 April 2019 highlighted the UK’s innovation and excellence around key themes of the industrial strategy and was opened by Michael Bloomberg.

Marshmallow Laser Feast produced a virtual reality immersive experience called ‘Sweet Dreams’ that tells a story of earth’s limited resources and sustainability, to complement two key themes of Designing Our Future – sustainability and technology.

No media service was procured from this company.

**■ Department for International Trade: Thomas Tucker****Emily Thornberry:** [\[78562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the (a) venue, (b) purpose, (c) list of attendees and (d) outcome was of her meeting on 10 October 2019 with Tommy Tucker.

**Greg Hands:**

The meeting formed part of the Department for International Trade's programme of engagement with external stakeholders.

**■ Human Rights: Yemen****Emily Thornberry:** [\[81669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 6 July 2015 air-strike on a market in Lahj was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 13 August 2016 air-strike on a school in Haydan was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 15 August 2016 air-strike on a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital in Abs was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 5 January 2016 air-strike on a school for the blind in Sanaa was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 8 January 2016 air-strike on a water desalination plant in Mokha was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 28 September 2015 air-strike on a wedding in Al-Wahijah was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 1 May 2015 air-strike on resort in Khadir was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 31 August 2019 air-strike on a college in Dhamar City was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 8 October 2016 air-strike on a hall in Sanhan was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 19 September 2015 air-strike on a market in Monabbih was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised

methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 24 September 2015 air-strike on a wedding in Al-Mukha was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 2 April 2018 air-strike on a displaced persons camp in Al-Hali was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 9 August 2018 air-strike on Dhahyan market in Majz was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 20 August 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Salah was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 22 October 2015 air-strike in Al-Luhaiyah was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[81685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 24 October 2018 air-

strike on a vegetable washing and packing facility in Bait Al-Faqih was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[81686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Written Statement of 7 July 2020, HCWS339 on Trade Update, whether the 27 February 2016 air-strike on Khulqa market in Niham was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law 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.

## ■ **Mozambique: Liquefied Natural Gas**

**Geraint Davies:**

[\[78468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the carbon footprint of the Mozambique gas project funded by UKF; and whether that carbon footprint meets the the UK's commitments under the 2015 Paris Climate Commitment and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

**Graham Stuart:**

The Project's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment estimated the annual Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the Mozambique LNG Project to be approximately 6 MtCO<sub>2eq.</sub> per annum. This equates to around 6 - 10% of Mozambique's national GHG emissions, which are historically very low (just over 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the UK per capita level). GHG emissions were estimated in accordance with the GHG Emissions Protocol: Corporate Accounting & Reporting Standard developed by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

The Paris Agreement (Article 4.1) recognises that the peaking of greenhouse gases will take longer for developing countries, such as Mozambique, and the LNG Project sits within Mozambique's longer-term plans to establish strong social and economic stability.

The Project's Scope 3 emissions are produced predominantly by the use of the Project's LNG. Calculating LNG Scope 3 emissions is highly complex and requires details of when, where, how and how much of the Project's gas volumes will be used. UKEF made some reasonable assumptions about Scope 3 emissions, that it then took into account in its review of the Project.

UKEF also considered the likelihood of the Project's gas being used to replace or displace more polluting hydrocarbon sources, such as oil and coal. This would result in lower net emissions when used as energy sources.

UKEF has not specifically considered alignment of the MOZ LNG Project in relation to the SDGs. As a UK government department delivering support to UK exporters, UKEF actively contributes to the UK's progress towards, and achievement of goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), goal 16 (peace justice and strong institutions) and goal 17 (partnership for the goals). UKEF's role in unlocking finance for delivery of projects has ancillary contributions to other SDGs in destination countries.

The UK Government keeps its support for the fossil fuels industry under review to ensure the UK reaches its net zero target by 2050.

#### ■ Overseas Trade: Hong Kong

**Paul Girvan:** [\[82300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans the Government has to remove any special trading status with Hong Kong in response to the imposition of the National Security Laws by the Chinese Government.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The UK does not currently plan to alter its trading relationship with Hong Kong, which is an independent World Trade Organisation (WTO) member.

#### ■ Prawns: Import Duties

**Bill Esterson:** [\[83782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans she has for tariffs on the import of prawns after the transition period.

**Greg Hands:**

On 19 May 2020, we announced our permanent Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff schedule, the UK Global Tariff (UKGT). The UKGT will enter in force on 1 January 2021 and will apply to all goods, such as prawns, imported in the UK unless an exception, such as preferential agreements, applies.

Businesses can check what tariffs will apply after the transition period on GOV.UK, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-tariffs-from-1-january-2021>.

## ■ Trade Agreements: Conditions of Employment

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[83841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with UK trade partners on protecting International Labour Organisation standards in future trade agreements.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

We share the public's high regard for worker protections. That's why, in line with our international obligations – including those under the International Labour Organisation – HM Government will continue to ensure a high level of protection for British labour standards in new trade agreements.

While the detail of free trade agreements are reserved for formal negotiations, HM Government has publicly committed to protecting labour standards in our outline approaches to Free Trade Agreements with the US, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Britain has been consistently clear in both our mandates and objectives that we will negotiate agreements that maintain our high standards for businesses, workers and consumers.

## ■ Trade Agreements: NHS

**Charlotte Nichols:**

[\[82517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make it her policy to exclude the NHS from potential future trade deals.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

Trade is vital for the NHS, which relies heavily on crucial goods and services that come wholly, or in part, from suppliers based overseas. Trade enables the NHS to buy the best possible medicines and medical devices that industry – here and overseas – has to offer.

At the same time, Britain's international public procurement commitments do not apply to the procurement of British healthcare services.

In fact, Britain's public services are protected by specific exclusions, exceptions and reservations in the trade agreements to which we are party, and HM Government will continue to make sure that the same rigorous protections are included in future trade agreements.

## ■ Trade Agreements: USA

**Jonathan Gullis:**

[\[82553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on negotiating a free trade agreement with the US.

**Greg Hands:**

The third negotiating round took place from 27 July to 7 August 2020, and the next round starts on 8 September. Updates are published on gov.uk after every round.

In parallel to the negotiations, in late August the International Trade Secretary held a series of meetings with the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, in which they reviewed progress in the negotiations. The International Trade Secretary reasserted the UK's priorities in a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and both sides reaffirmed their commitment to negotiating a comprehensive and ambitious agreement. It was agreed that they should continue at pace throughout the Autumn.

## ■ Trade and Agriculture Commission: Fish

**Luke Pollard:** [\[77801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the remit of the Trade and Agriculture Commission includes fish and fishing products.

**Greg Hands:**

The Trade and Agriculture Commission's terms of reference allow the Commission to look across the agricultural and food industries, including the fisheries sector. The Commission is an independent advisory board and will determine its own priorities within the terms of reference, as its work evolves.

## ■ Whisky: USA

**Alan Brown:** [\[82104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July to Question 76780 on Whisky: USA, what discussions she has had with her counterpart in the US on the tariffs applied to Scotch Whisky exports to the US since the meeting on 10 July 2020; and what the US Administration's position is on the removal of those tariffs.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July to Question 76780 on Whisky: USA, whether the effects of the imposition of tariffs on blended scotch whisky was discussed at the meeting on 10 July 2020; and if she will make a statement.

**Greg Hands:**

The UK Government continues to raise this issue at the highest levels with the US administration. In July, the Secretary of State for International Trade discussed the threat of additional tariffs on UK industry with US Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer. In early August the Secretary of State visited the US raising this issue again with Robert Lighthizer, pressing for the removal of tariffs as soon as possible.

Whilst revisions made by the US on 12 August to the retaliatory tariffs on EU and UK products were limited in scope, it is disappointing that the US continues to apply its retaliatory tariffs under the Airbus dispute ten months on.

**JUSTICE****■ Bail Information Schemes**

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[77544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many courts in England and Wales are served by a Bail Information Service.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[77545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the results of the Bail Information Service pilots.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[77546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans the Government has to extend the availability of Bail Information Services in England and Wales.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Currently, no courts or prisons have a full and pro-active Bail Information Service (BIS) with dedicated Bail Information Officers. Although there are no dedicated bail officers, bail assessments can be requested by the Judiciary and HM Prison and Probation Service staff will acknowledge and respond accordingly. Throughout April to August, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) introduced a temporary BIS in response to Covid-19. As courts and HMPPS services begin returning to business as usual, the service remains available on a reactive basis at the request of the court.

The Government will be implementing a BIS pilot involving a number of courts and prisons in England and Wales in the Autumn. These courts and prisons will each have a dedicated Bail Information Officer, and the pilot will aim to inform the design and delivery of a potential full and pro-active national service. The pilot is due to be completed by Spring 2021, and HM Prison and Probation Service intends to publish a report of findings as soon as practicable after that. This will include plans on the potential extending of BIS availability across England and Wales.

**■ Courts: Closures and Sales**

**Ellie Reeves:** [\[77769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost to the public purse was of (a) closing and selling Telford county court in 2017, (b) reopening that court in 2020, (c) closing and selling Fleetwood magistrates court in 2019 and (d) reopening that court in 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

On 19 July, HM Courts & Tribunals Service announced ten sites to provide additional capacity for the courts and tribunals estate on a temporary basis. These sites included two previously closed court houses; Telford County Court and Fleetwood Magistrates' Court. These courts were not sold and have now been re-utilised to provide temporary additional capacity as part of the nightingale court programme.

Costs as requested are provided below:

|                              | <b>CLOSURE (DECOMMISSIONING)<br/>COSTS</b> | <b>NIGHTINGALE SETUP COSTS*</b> |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Telford County Court         | £22,201                                    | £251,421                        |
| Fleetwood Magistrates' Court | £49,267                                    | £150,312                        |

\*these are setup costs and include the cost of IT and video equipment, furniture, portage, enabling works to prepare a site, and other costs such as security equipment.

### ■ Emergency Services: Crimes of Violence

**Philip Davies:**

[\[78583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people convicted of assaulting an emergency worker since the offence was introduced had previously committed (a) zero, (b) between one and four, (c) between five and nine, (d) between 10 and 15, (e) between 16 and 25, (f) between 26 and 50, (g) between 51 and 75, (h) between 76 and 100, (i) between 101 and 150, (j) between 151 and 200 and (k) over 200 offences.

**Chris Philp:**

Obtaining the necessary information to answer these questions involves accessing the secure Police National Computer (PNC) system, which my relevant officials are unable to do at this time in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. I will write to the Hon Member in due course with the information requested, once my officials are able to safely access the PNC system, and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[78584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offences that were recorded as convictions for assaulting an emergency worker were assaults against (a) police officers, (b) NHS staff, (c) prison officers, (d) firefighters and (e) other emergency workers since the offence was introduced.

**Chris Philp:**

Never has the debt of gratitude we owe our emergency workers been greater, they are heroes who risk their lives to keep us safe. Assaulting an emergency worker is wholly unacceptable and we need to make sure that the criminal law can reflect the seriousness with which we take these crimes.

That is why the Government recently announced a consultation on doubling the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker, in line with its manifesto commitment.

Court outcomes data centrally held by the Ministry of Justice does not identify the specific occupation of the victim. The exception to this is the summary offence 'Assault on a constable'. This offence, albeit that it remains on the statute book with a

maximum penalty of 6 months imprisonment, has been superseded by the triable either way offence of 'Assault on an emergency worker', which was introduced in November 2018. This offence has a maximum penalty of 12 months imprisonment and applies to the police, in addition to other categories of emergency workers.

The information may be held on court records, however identification of the occupation of victims would require access to these records to manually collect information, which would be of disproportionate cost.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on convictions and sentencing outcomes for the following offences: 'Assault on a constable', 'Assault of an emergency worker' and 'Common assault' up to December 2019, available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx)

## ■ Employment Tribunals Service: Finance

**Stella Creasy:**

**[84223]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the budget was for the Employment Tribunal Service in each year from 2010-11 to 2020-21.

**Chris Philp:**

The gross budget for the Employment Tribunal Service in each year since the 2010-11 financial year is as follows:

2010/11 - £60.9m

2011/12 - £62.6m

2012/13 - £58.0m

2013/14 - £53.4m

2014/15 - £50.9m

2015/16 - £51.2m

2016/17 - £41.4m

2017/18 - £52.4m

2018/19 - £56.3m

2019/20 - £66.2m

\*2020/21 - £70.8m

These figures are for costs only, and exclude fees received and overheads of the tribunal.

\*The figure for the current 2020-21 financial year is provisional and may be subject to change.

**Judges: Powers**

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[78507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to reclaim powers from judges.

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[78508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that the judiciary are held to account by (a) elected politicians and (b) voters.

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[78509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of electing judges.

**Chris Philp:**

An independent judiciary is the cornerstone of our constitution and democracy, and the Government is rightly proud of our world-class judiciary. Judicial independence from the Executive and Parliament is a fundamental tenet of the rule of law. Under the separation of powers doctrine, a core function of Parliament is to make legislation which will then be interpreted and applied by the judiciary. It is vital that judges are able to make rulings on their merits in law alone.

We have no plans to alter the process for making judicial appointments. Our judges are selected following a rigorous, independent, merit-based process which is key to maintaining the quality, integrity and independence of our judiciary.

**Prison Visitors**

**Nadia Whittome:** [\[78933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that social visits to prisoners can be made possible at every prison.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Social visits to prisons were suspended on 24 March 2020 and because of the suspension and our wider actions to tackle COVID, lives have been saved and the NHS has been protected from the impact of widespread local outbreaks.

In line with the National Framework for Prison Regimes and Services published on 2 June 2020, prisons have gradually been re-commencing social visits since 8 July 2020 with many sites already holding visiting sessions. More are scheduled to resume in the coming days and weeks.

Establishments are progressing at their own speed, taking full account of their specific local circumstances. We continue to work with individual prisons to adjust restrictions in response to local conditions which may include an outbreak of infection in the prison or community.

Where social visits have resumed, there are necessary measures in place to protect visitors, prisoners and staff from the risk of infection. They include compulsory face coverings for visitors, social distancing and enhanced cleaning regimes.

A temporary video call service to support prisoners maintaining contact with family and friends has also been introduced. This is intended for use whilst contact is limited.

## ■ Prisoners' Release: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[82217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison leavers in 2019 had an origin address in Wales, by prison establishment.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In 2019, the below number of prisoners had an origin address in Wales by prison establishment:

| PRISON                    | COUNT |
|---------------------------|-------|
| ALTCOURSE (HMP)           | 382   |
| ASHFIELD (HMP)            | 6     |
| ASKHAM GRANGE (HMP & YOI) |       |
| BEDFORD (HMP)             |       |
| BERWYN (HMP)              | 356   |
| BIRMINGHAM (HMP)          | 7     |
| BRINSFORD (HMP)           |       |
| BRISTOL (HMP)             |       |
| BRIXTON (HMP)             |       |
| BRONZEFIELD (HMP)         |       |
| BUCKLEY HALL (HMP)        |       |
| BULLINGDON (HMP)          |       |
| BURE (HMP)                |       |
| CARDIFF (HMP)             | 1331  |
| CHANNINGS WOOD (HMP)      |       |
| COLDINGLEY (HMP)          |       |
| COOKHAM WOOD (HMP)        |       |

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| <b>PRISON</b>                | <b>COUNT</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| DARTMOOR (HMP)               |              |
| DEERBOLT (HMPYOI)            |              |
| DONCASTER (HMP)              |              |
| DOVEGATE (HMP)               |              |
| DOWNVIEW (HMP)               |              |
| DRAKE HALL (HMP & YOI)       | 14           |
| EAST SUTTON PARK (HMP & YOI) |              |
| EASTWOOD PARK (HMP)          | 386          |
| ELMLEY (HMP)                 |              |
| ERLESTOKE (HMP)              |              |
| EXETER (HMP)                 |              |
| FEATHERSTONE (HMP)           |              |
| FELTHAM (HMP & YOI)          |              |
| FORD (HMP)                   |              |
| FOREST BANK (HMP & YOI)      | 7            |
| FOSTON HALL (HMP)            |              |
| FULL SUTTON (HMP)            |              |
| GUYS MARSH (HMP)             | 7            |
| HAVERIGG (HMP)               |              |
| HIGH DOWN (HMP)              | 8            |
| HIGHPOINT (HMP)              |              |
| HINDLEY (HMP & YOI)          | 9            |
| HMP HEWELL                   |              |
| HOLLESLEY BAY (HMP)          |              |
| HULL (HMP)                   |              |
| HUMBER (HMP)                 |              |

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| <b>PRISON</b>           | <b>COUNT</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| HUNTERCOMBE (HMP)       | 12           |
| ISIS HMP/YOI            |              |
| ISLE OF WIGHT (HMP)     |              |
| KIRKHAM (HMP)           | 22           |
| LANCASTER FARMS (HMP)   | 11           |
| LEEDS (HMP)             |              |
| LEWES (HMP)             |              |
| LEYHILL (HMP)           | 25           |
| LITTLEHEY (HMP)         |              |
| LIVERPOOL (HMP)         | 8            |
| LOW NEWTON (HMP)        |              |
| MAIDSTONE (HMP)         |              |
| MANCHESTER (HMP)        |              |
| MOORLAND (HMP & YOI)    |              |
| NEW HALL (HMP)          |              |
| NORTH SEA CAMP (HMP)    |              |
| NORTHUMBERLAND (HMP)    |              |
| NORWICH (HMP & YOI)     |              |
| NOTTINGHAM (HMP)        |              |
| OAKWOOD (HMP)           | 24           |
| ONLEY (HMP)             |              |
| PARC (HMP)              | 788          |
| PETERBOROUGH (HMP)      |              |
| PETERBOROUGH FEMALE HMP |              |
| PORTLAND (HMPYOI)       |              |
| PRESKOED (HMP & YOI)    | 146          |

| PRISON                | COUNT |
|-----------------------|-------|
| PRESTON (HMP)         |       |
| RANBY (HMP)           |       |
| RISLEY (HMP)          | 22    |
| ROCHESTER (HMP & YOI) |       |
| RYE HILL (HMP)        |       |
| SEND (HMP)            | 7     |
| STAFFORD (HMP)        | 18    |
| STOKE HEATH (HMPYOI)  | 20    |
| STYAL (HMP & YOI)     | 71    |
| SUDBURY (HMP & YOI)   | 7     |
| SWANSEA (HMP)         | 793   |
| SWINFEN HALL (HMP)    | 6     |
| THAMESIDE (HMP)       |       |
| THE MOUNT (HMP)       |       |
| THORN CROSS (HMPYOI)  | 15    |
| USK (HMP)             | 39    |
| WANDSWORTH (HMP)      |       |
| WARREN HILL (HMP)     |       |
| WERRINGTON (HMPYOI)   | 6     |
| WETHERBY (HMPYOI)     |       |
| WHATTON (HMP)         | 7     |
| WINCHESTER (HMP)      |       |
| WORMWOOD SCRUBS (HMP) |       |
| WYMOTT (HMP)          | 7     |

Please note that the figures in the attached tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

The results are sorted by origin address (home address on reception into custody) and not nationality.

Around 97% of prisoners have an origin location - i.e. addresses that are recorded in our central IT system. If no address is given, an offender's committal court address is used as a proxy for the area in which they are resident. Around 3% of prisoners do not have either an address or court information recorded. Where an individual offender was released more than once in 2019 their origin address is based on data from their most recent custodial record.

It is important to stress that it is not possible to infer from an address in Wales that an individual considers themselves Welsh/English. Therefore, the data shown are not necessarily representative of those who identify as English or Welsh.

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[82218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide a breakdown of the accommodation status of prison leavers in 2019 who had an origin address in Wales.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Everyone leaving prison should have somewhere safe and secure to live. Accommodation enables ex-offenders to hold down a job and reduces the likelihood of them reoffending. Prison leavers face significant barriers to securing suitable accommodation often linked to their lack of access to necessary funds, availability of local authority housing supply and affordability or access to the private rented sector. However, overcoming these barriers is something that Ministry of Justice cannot do in isolation and we are working across governments to ensure leavers have secure accommodation to go to.

In 2019, the accommodation status of prison leavers with an origin address in Wales was as follows:

|                               | TOTAL RELEASES |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Bail/probation accommodation  | 320            |
| Other homeless                | 386            |
| Other unsettled accommodation | 398            |
| Rough sleeping                | 94             |
| Settled accommodation         | 1746           |
| Unknown                       | 1771           |

**Notes on data :**

Please note that the figures in the attached tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large-scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

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It is important to stress that it is not possible to infer from an address in Wales that an individual considers themselves Welsh/English. Therefore, the data shown are not necessarily representative of those who identify as English or Welsh.

"Settled accommodation" means:

(i) any accommodation that provides a permanent independent housing solution including as owner occupier; tenant in a tenancy available for a minimum 3 month period; living as part of a family where the Applicable Person is able to reside in that home permanently and is able to return to that home; living with a friend with a bedroom available for the Applicable Person's use and access to domestic facilities; a caravan or boat that is viewed by the Applicable Person as his permanent home;

(ii) supported housing provided by an accredited housing agency that is provided for a minimum 3 month period and includes support for the Applicable Person in relation to moving to a permanent independent housing solution

"Bail/probation accommodation" includes probation Approved Premises, Bail Accommodation Support Services (BASS) accommodation and accommodation provided by the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Service.

"Other homeless" refers to individuals who identify as homeless but have not been identified as sleeping rough. In some cases, it is not recorded whether an individual that is identified as homeless is rough sleeping. These cases have been included in the "Other homeless" category.

"Other unsettled accommodation" refers to individuals living in transient/short term accommodation that does not provide a long-term solution to housing need.

"Unknown Circumstance" refers to individuals where accommodation status on release is not held on the internal probation case management system, or where a match was not found when linking prison records to the internal probation case management system.

All Accommodation Circumstances are recorded on a 'first night' basis, i.e. the status that is current to the first night following release from custody (including release from court).

## ■ Prisons: Construction

**Sir John Hayes:**

[\[78504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to build additional prison capacity.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Prime Minister has previously made clear his focus on tackling crime and last year announced investment of up to £2.5 billion to create 10,000 additional prison places that are decent, safe and secure and support the modernisation of the prison estate.

On 28 June 2020, I announced that four new prisons are to be built across England over the next six years ( [HCWS320](#) ). Together, these four prisons will create around 65% of the 10,000 additional places and will build on the design and progress that we have already made at Wellingborough and Glen Parva where construction of two new 1,680 place category C Resettlement prisons continues.

As well as building four new prisons, our programme to deliver 10,000 additional places includes expanding and refurbishing the current estate by building additional houseblocks and bringing decommissioned places back into use at the required standard.

Prison numbers can fluctuate, which is why we have a robust set of plans in place to ensure we will always have enough places for offenders sent to custody by the courts. As such, we keep the prison population and capacity under careful review to ensure that there is always sufficient capacity. We are planning our longer-term supply to meet future demand.

## ■ Prisons: Technology

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[78591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 65980 on Prisons: Construction, what plans he has to consult (a) prison educators, (b) prison education trade unions and (c) other stakeholders before any decisions are made on the technology that will be deployed in cells.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[78592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 65980 on Prisons: Construction, what assessment he has made of the ability of the public sector to (a) develop and (b) deliver in-cell technology.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Access to modern, secure technology to deliver education and improve outcomes for learners is key to our plans for the new prisons which are to be built across England over the next six years.

The infrastructure to enable in-cell technology has been incorporated into the construction of the new prisons at Wellingborough and Glen Parva. This

infrastructure will also be designed into the four new prisons that we are building as part of our commitment to creating 10,000 additional prison places through an investment of up to £2.5 billion.

Decisions on what the specific in-cell device for users will be is a matter for the eventual operator (public or private). We remain committed to a mixed market in custodial services and will seek to build on the successful public sector development and delivery of in-cell technology in HMP Wayland and HMP Berwyn. For any publicly-run new prisons, we will liaise with relevant stakeholders including education providers. For any privately-run prisons, it will be for the operator to decide who to liaise with in developing their education offer. Engagement with the education trade unions will be done through education providers, who are responsible for engagement with their staff and recognised trade unions.

## ■ Probate

**John Spellar:**

[\[77510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of applications for probate were processed within his Department's target for processing those applications.

**Chris Philp:**

There are no prescribed target times for dealing with probate applications. The average time for a grant of probate to be issued following receipt of an application for January to March 2020 is set out below

| Year | Quarter | Grants issued | APPLICATION SUBMISSION TO GRANT ISSUE <sup>6</sup> |              | DOCUMENT RECEIPT TO GRANT ISSUE <sup>4,6</sup> |              |
|------|---------|---------------|--|--------------|--|--------------|
|      |         |               | Mean weeks   | Median weeks | Mean weeks                                     | Median weeks |
| 2020 | Q1      | 49,712        | 6.7  | 4.3          | 6.5  | 4.1          |

Source: HMCTS Core Case Data

Notes:

- 1) HMCTS Core Case Data came into effect at the end of March 2019, following a transition between data systems recording information regarding The Probate Service
- 2) The average timeliness figures are produced by calculating the time from application/document receipt (which may be from an earlier period) to the grant issued made in that period.
- 3) Averages presented here may be based on a small number of grants. Where this occurs, any conclusion drawn from these will be limited.

- 4) Document receipt occurs after payment has been made and all accompanying paperwork has been received by HMCTS
- 5) Due to quality issues in the transition between data systems, the breakdown by type of grant has not been published for Q2 2019 (denoted by :).
- 6) For digital applications the receipt is instant but no work can start until the Will is sent to us. Therefore, for digital cases the measure of waiting times is from document receipt rather than the application submission.

## ■ Probation

**Grahame Morris:**

**[78617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of each model of probation service delivery on (a) rates of (i) re-offending and (ii) staff wellbeing and (b) the adequacy of that service delivery.

**Lucy Frazer:**

In response to part a(i), proven reoffence data is being captured during this time and will, as before, be published. The most recently published proven reoffending statistics (January to March 2018) is published and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-january-to-march-2018>

On part a(ii), we have been engaging with staff to understand their experiences of working during this period. HM Prison and Probation Service will continue to provide support for the psychological wellbeing of staff through a number of support mechanisms, and, as outlined in the newly published Probation Workforce Strategy, have already committed to implementing a wellbeing action plan for all staff across probation. This includes Mental Health Allies, better access to 'post-incident' support, such as counselling, and psychology training for managers.

The information requested can be found at gov.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/probation-workforce-strategy>

In relation to part b, HMPPS has carried out regular internal assurance on delivery under the Exceptional Delivery Models by both the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies.

**Grahame Morris:**

**[78619]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of probation services remaining permanently under public ownership and civil service control.

**Lucy Frazer:**

We are unifying probation under the National Probation Service from June 2021. This will allow us to strengthen supervision and support for offenders while providing a critical level of resilience and stability for core services.

Bringing offender management, unpaid work placements and behaviour change programmes under the NPS will allow us to focus resources on those offenders who pose the greatest risk to the public, and improve continuity of supervision by the same Probation Officer over the duration of a sentence.

However, it is important that we continue to draw upon the talent and expertise of the private and voluntary sectors to cut reoffending and support offenders to turn their lives around. Private and voluntary sector organisations can still bid for a range of contracts for rehabilitation and resettlement support through the Probation Services Dynamic Framework. We anticipate eventually spending over £100 million a year on these services.

### ■ Probation: Wales

**Grahame Morris:** [\[78618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the transition of probation services in Wales into the public sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The transition activity in Wales has progressed well and met all milestones. During this period published performance data indicates a strong continuity in achievement for NPS Wales, with a limited impact on service, based on previous quarters.

Performance from December 2019 to March 2020 is part of published data and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-performance-quarterly-update-to-march-2020>

### ■ Restraining Orders

**Sir Edward Davey:** [\[78473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many restraining orders have been broken in each (a) month of 2020 and (b) of the last five years.

**Chris Philp:**

The Ministry of Justice has published information on convictions for 'Breach of a restraining order' up to December 2019, which is available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx)

The number of offenders convicted for 'Breach of a restraining order' in each year since 2009 can be found using the offence filter to search for 'Breach of a restraining order'. Convictions can be found in row 24.

Court outcomes data for 2020 will be published in May 2021.

## ■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

**Philip Davies:** [\[78589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of assaults on shop workers resulted in (a) a discharge, (b) a fine, (c) a community order, (d) a suspended custodial sentence and (e) an immediate custodial sentence in each of the last three years.

**Chris Philp:**

The Government recognises the damaging impact that violence and abuse can have on victims, businesses, and the wider community; and we are committed to tackling this issue.

The Home Office published their response to a call for evidence on assaults against shopworkers on 7 July: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-and-abuse-toward-shop-staff-call-for-evidence>

Court outcomes data centrally held by the Ministry of Justice does not identify the specific occupation of the victim. The information may be held on court record, however identification of the occupation of victims would require access court records to manually collect information, which would be of disproportionate cost.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on convictions and sentencing outcomes for 'Common assault' up to December 2019, available in the Outcomes by Offence data tool:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx)

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

**Chris Stephens:** [\[83857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of appeals to the Tribunals Service for (a) personal independence payment, (b) employment and support allowance, (c) income support, (d) jobseekers allowance and (e) tax credits were successful in (i) 2018-19 and (ii) 2019-20 in (A) Glasgow South West constituency, (B) Glasgow, (C) Scotland and (D) Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

**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](http://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 (a) Personal Independence Payment and (b) Employment and Support Allowance appeals for hearing venues covering (A) Glasgow South West (B) Glasgow (C) Scotland and (D) Great Britain for the periods 2018-19 and 2019-20; they also provide information about the outcomes for (c) Income Support (IS), (d) Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and (e) Tax Credits for Great Britain for the same periods.

The table below contains the requested information for IS, JSA and Tax Credits for Glasgow and Scotland:

PROPORTION <sup>1</sup> OF APPEALS DECIDED IN FAVOUR OF THE APPELLANT 2018-19 AND 2019-20

|                        | IS                   | IS       | JSA     | JSA      | Tax credits <sup>2</sup> | Tax credits |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------|---------|----------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 2018-2019 <sup>3</sup> | Glasgow <sup>4</sup> | Scotland | Glasgow | Scotland | Glasgow                  | Scotland    |
|                        | 38%                  | 33%      | 36%     | 34%      | 41%                      | 35%         |
| 2019-2020 <sup>3</sup> | 40%                  | 39%      | 25%     | 29%      | 36%                      | 34%         |

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Working Family Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit.

<sup>3</sup> Financial Year 1 April to 31 March.

<sup>4</sup> SSCS appeals for Glasgow South West constituents are heard in the Glasgow venue but this venue also hears appeals from other Glasgow constituencies. It is not possible to provide constituency-specific data.

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 that are available.

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

Decisions on benefit entitlement can be overturned on appeal for a variety of reasons. For instance, further evidence, including evidence in the form of oral testimony, may be provided at the hearing. HM Courts & Tribunals Service cannot comment on decisions made by independent tribunal judiciary.

## ■ Solicitors: Coronavirus

**Sir Edward Davey:**

[\[78474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to help improve access between solicitors and their clients during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Despite the absence of physical visits, prisoners maintain the right to access legal advice, and we have looked to ensure that prisoners continue to have the tools to make contact with their legal representatives via telephone, video link or written correspondence.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, we have enhanced the capability of prison video conferencing facilities, particularly to support priority court work such as sentencing hearings and prisoners approaching their parole hearing dates. We have made use of

the additional 1,250 handsets issued to prisons without in-cell telephony in order to facilitate private conversations with legal advisers, alongside encouraging governors to ensure prisoners can have conversations with their representatives in confidence.

We have also been taking steps to increase the available capacity of video conferencing at some locations through increased operating hours to include longer hours during the weekdays, and in some cases on Saturdays. Alongside this work, we are increasing the physical number of video link outlets at a number of critical sites where capacity is limited, as well as to support specialist courts, including youth and women's prisons.

As stated in our National Framework for recovery in prisons, we are adapting aspects of prison regime, in consultation with trade unions and health partners, to restart key services. We have consulted representatives of the legal profession on the resumption of legal visits so that they can resume in a safe manner over the next few weeks.

## ■ Young Offenders: Crimes of Violence

**Philip Davies:**

**[78581]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many youth offenders were sentenced for assault occasioning actual bodily harm, by (a) sex, (b) age and (c) perceived ethnicity in the last 12 months for which information is available.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The Ministry of Justice has published information on sentencing up to December 2019. The number of youth offenders sentenced for assault occasioning actual bodily harm, by sex, age and ethnicity can be found in the 'Outcome by offence data tool', available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888664/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx)

In the pivot table:

- Filter the Offence field to '8.01 Assault occasioning actual bodily harm'. Youth offenders are categorised as '01: Children' in the Age group field – select this filter.
- To see figures for just those sentenced, remove 'Values' from the Rows box in the filed list and drag the 'Sentenced' field into the Values box.
- Drag the field of interest i.e. 'Age range', 'Sex' and 'Ethnicity' into the Rows box in the filed list to see the number of youth offenders sentenced by these characteristics.

**NORTHERN IRELAND****■ Anniversaries: Northern Ireland**

**Jonathan Gullis:** [\[82561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to mark the 100th anniversary of Northern Ireland in 2021.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

In the *New Decade, New Approach* deal, the Government committed to marking this centenary, recognising that it offered an opportunity to reflect on the past as well as to build for the future, in Northern Ireland, across the UK and internationally. We committed to facilitating national recognition and international awareness of the anniversary, which marks not only the centenary of Northern Ireland, but also of the United Kingdom as we know it.

On his recent visit to Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a Centenary Forum, and a Centenary Historical Advisory Panel. This will offer us the opportunity to work with a broad spectrum of people to deliver an ambitious and exciting programme of events to mark the anniversary. Further details about the centenary programme will be available later in the autumn.

**■ Football: Northern Ireland**

**Paul Bristow:** [\[84366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions his Department has had with (a) the Irish Football Association, (b) the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and (c) the Northern Ireland Executive on relaunching the British Home Football Championship.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

No discussions have taken place between the Northern Ireland Office and representatives of the Irish Football Association, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport or the Northern Ireland Executive on relaunching the British Home Championship.

**■ Northern Ireland Office: Freedom of Information**

**Carla Lockhart:** [\[78926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many Freedom of Information requests his Department has received in each of the last three years; and how many of those requests (a) remain unanswered and (b) have been referred to the Information Commissioner.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

Statistical information on my department's performance in respect of handling Freedom of Information requests is published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics#2020>

There have been no referrals to the Information Commissioner's Office this year. There were 2 in 2018, and 2 in 2019.

#### ■ **Official Visits: Northern Ireland**

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[78925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many times he has met with each of the Northern Ireland Executive Ministers in an official capacity since taking up his role as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Secretary of State and I regularly meet with Executive Ministers on a range of issues affecting the people of Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State has regular meetings with the First and deputy First Ministers, along with further Executive engagement via the New Decade, New Approach board.

As Minister of State, I frequently engage with Executive ministers. Recent engagement has focused on how the UK Government plans to mark the NI Centenary and the benefits for the people of Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Office works closely with the NI Executive, and is committed to continuing to foster a productive working relationship that benefits all of Northern Ireland.

#### ■ **Ports: Northern Ireland**

**Margaret Greenwood:**

[\[83840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of the infrastructure that will be required at ports in Northern Ireland under the Northern Ireland protocol.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol will be delivered by the end of the Transition Period. There will be no new physical customs infrastructure in Northern Ireland and we see no need to build any.

We will be making the necessary adjustments to existing entry points for agrifood goods to provide for proportionate additional controls including some checks to help movements of live animals and agrifood from Great Britain into Northern Ireland. This is in order to respect the pre-existing status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit. Our proposals will reduce requirements to the absolute minimum so that the integrity and smooth functioning of the UK internal market is protected, in line with the approach we set out in our May Command Paper.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Civil Servants: Edinburgh**

**John Lamont:** [\[83904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what progress has been made in moving civil servants to Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

As the new home of UK Government in Scotland, Queen Elizabeth House will house 3,000 civil servants representing a broad range of UK Government activity. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ **Football**

**Paul Bristow:** [\[82508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the (a) Scottish Football Association and (b) Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the prospects for relaunching the British Home Football Championship.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The international football calendar is a matter for football's national and international governing bodies.

The four nations of the UK all currently compete as part of the UEFA Nations League, a biennial international football competition which largely has replaced friendlies. The UEFA Nations league started on Thursday 3 September, and I wish all the home nations well.

■ **Local Growth Deals: Ayrshire**

**Alan Brown:** [\[84291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, when the final agreement for the Ayrshire Growth Deal will be signed between the UK Government, the Scottish Government and the three Ayrshire council authorities; and if will he make a statement.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

We are making good progress with the Ayrshire Growth Deal and I hope to be able to sign the final agreement before the end of October. We are currently working with all the signatories to try to identify a suitable date.

■ **Local Growth Deals: Borderlands**

**John Lamont:** [\[83905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what steps he will take to fast track the Borderlands Growth Deal to ensure it can help the area recover from the economic effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

We are continuing to work at pace with the Borderlands partners to agree project business cases. Good progress has been made on a number of business cases including the Dairy Nexus project and the regeneration of Chapelcross and we hope to sign the Borderlands Full Deal agreement before the end of 2020.

■ **Scotland Office: Staff****Neil O'Brien:**[\[83941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, how many members of staff in his Department have equality, diversity or inclusion in their job title.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

A number of staff undertake a wide range of functions and activities including equality, diversity or inclusion responsibilities, which are undertaken in conjunction with other duties and not specifically referenced in job titles.

**TRANSPORT**■ **Aviation and Package Holidays: Coronavirus****Jim Shannon:**[\[77617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to help people who have outstanding claims for refunds for holidays and flights that were cancelled as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government recognises the challenges businesses are experiencing and the frustration consumers are feeling with regards to refunds for cancelled holidays and flights. The department has been clear that airlines should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund, if it is requested and this should be done in a timely manner.

The 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.

■ **Aviation: Coronavirus****Caroline Lucas:**[\[77555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June to Question 59209 on Aviation: Coronavirus, when the second phase of the aviation restart and recovery expert group's work is expected to start; what the timescale is for the review of the membership of that group; if he will make it his policy for that membership to

include (a) climate change experts, (b) representatives from environmental NGOs, (c) representatives from local communities affected by airport expansion plans; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[77556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will place in the Library a copy of his response to the letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Public and Commercial Services union, the Aviation Environment Federation and others, on the inclusion of a climate objective and of representatives from environmental and community groups, academics and other trade unions in the first phase of the Expert Steering Group on restart and recovery of the aviation industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The International Aviation Taskforce's Expert Steering Group (ESG) provided industry the opportunity to feed into the practical application of any new policies and co-produce solutions where possible. ESG has met its purpose and has undoubtedly been vital in achieving the milestones of producing health measures guidance and helping government establish Travel Corridors.

Whilst our absolute focus in Government at this time is combating COVID-19, we do recognise that it's important that we continue to work on our longer-term priorities including tackling climate change and improving air quality. The Transport Secretary announced the formation of a new 'Jet Zero Council', which will bring together government, aviation, academia, as well as environmental groups represented through the AEF, to make net zero emission flights possible.

A copy of the Transport Secretary's response to the letter dated 8 July 2020 will be placed in the Library.

**John Spellar:**

[84146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with trade unions representing workers in the aviation sector on the effect of changing quarantine regulations on employment in that sector.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Government recognises that international travel corridors provide a vital lifeline for UK travel operators and for those whose jobs rely on the travel industry, as well as of the impacts from removing a country or territory from the exemption for self-isolation requirement for arrivals due to the continued risk from Covid-19.

The Department for Transport is leading engagement across the transport sector to implement and communicate any changes for self-isolation requirement to operators and passengers. Unions remain part of the Department's regular engagement on all matters currently impacting the sector.

## ■ Aviation: Fares

**Nickie Aiken:**

**[77804]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the proposal by the online travel agent TravelUp to ringfence civil aviation fares until departure to prevent customers having to wait long periods of time to be reimbursed for cancelled trips.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Department has been clear that airlines and travel agents 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 (CAA) 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of challenges. The department is keen to work with the regulator, industry and consumer groups to learn lessons from pandemic, to make changes that are practicable and deliverable.

## ■ Bicycles: Parking

**Kerry McCarthy:**

**[84161]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding the Government is making available to local authorities seeking to implement on-street bike storage.

**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. As part of this drive, the Government is committed to installing more cycle racks in town and city centres and where they are most needed. The Cycling and Walking Plan can be viewed at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england)

In May, the Government announced £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking. £225 million is being made available to local authorities in 2020-21 via the Emergency Active Travel Fund. The Department made clear to local authorities that some of this funding could be used for cycle parking to complement new cycle routes. Decisions on the rest of the £2 billion will be a matter for the Spending Review later this year.

**■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus****Apsana Begum:** [\[78878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it possible for a UK citizen stranded abroad with an out-of-date driving licence to receive a temporary emergency licence in order for them to return the UK.

**Apsana Begum:** [\[78879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support is available to UK citizens who are stranded abroad with an out-of-date driving licence which is preventing them from returning to the UK.

**Rachel Maclean:**

As a driving licence is not a travel document, an out of date licence should not prevent a UK citizen from returning to the UK. There is no facility to issue temporary emergency driving licences.

UK citizens with an urgent need to travel who do not have a valid passport may be able to apply for an emergency travel document. Information on how to apply for an emergency travel document can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document>

**■ Bus Services: Coronavirus****Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[84142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on developing an initiative to support a furlough scheme for (a) luxury coaches and (b) other assets which cannot be used during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

My Department continues to meet regularly with representatives of the coach sector to understand their concerns and identify potential opportunities to support the sector, and have been supportive of the use of coaches to provide additional home to school transport as schools return. We will continue to consider the needs of the wider transport sector and respond appropriately, where necessary.

The Government has announced several measures available to UK businesses, including the coach sector, to financially support them through this time. The measures include:

- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
- Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS)
- Time to pay (TTP)
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS), which has been extended until the end of October 2020
- VAT deferral

Details of all of the Government's support measures for businesses is available at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

## ■ Buses: Exhaust Emissions

**John McNally:** [\[77682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with UK bus (a) manufacturers and (b) operators on the February 2020 Government announcement on purchasing at least 4,000 zero emission buses.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department is in regular dialogue with bus operators and manufacturers. The Minister responsible for Buses, Baroness Vere, recently chaired a roundtable which was attended by the Chief Executives of the largest UK bus manufacturers, bus trade associations and operators, and this topic was on the agenda.

**John McNally:** [\[77683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Prime Minister's statement on Transport infrastructure of 11 February 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the funding for 4,000 zero emission buses on air quality.

**Rachel Maclean:**

To assess the impact of 4,000 Zero-Emission Buses (ZEBs) on air quality, the Department has analysed how various factors of air quality would change with changing the fleet. Using data from the TAG Databook, factors such as the cost of carbon, CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions have been considered. It must be noted that the change in air quality depends on numerous factors such as the model and age of the vehicle being replaced and the average speed of the vehicles. Definitive changes in air quality will depend on where the buses are deployed.

## ■ Cycleways

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[84159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is giving to Sustrans to increase the National Cycle Network.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department is providing £22 million to Sustrans to deliver 32 projects across the National Cycle Network in England. The funding will deliver a range of improvements including fixing dangerous junctions, reducing traffic levels, building better surfaces, creating wider paths, and repairing damaged signage. Further funding for the National Cycle Network will be considered as part of the Spending Review.

## ■ Cycling: Highway Code

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[84160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of Cycling UK's 10 proposed changes to the Highway Code.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department has been working with key stakeholders, including Cycling UK, to undertake a review of The Highway Code to tackle the safety issues that cyclists and pedestrians face, or perceive, when travelling on our roads and support the Government's aim of increasing cycling and walking.

On 28 July, the Government published a consultation on the proposed changes to The Highway Code which includes the 10 amendments proposed by Cycling UK. The final changes to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders will be determined by the consultation responses.

## ■ Department for Transport: Training

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[77799\]](#)

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

**Neil O'Brien**

Over the last five years, at least 9,976 members of staff have completed unconscious bias training in DfT including its Executive Agencies. This is set out in the attached table.

- Figures for each Agency in the last five years is set out in the attached table
- Where data is not available, this is due to the Civil Service Learning Privacy Notice stating that management information will be retained by the Cabinet Office for no more than three financial years. Data may be retained by individual Department's for the purposes of reporting beyond this period.
- Where data has not been provided within the last three years (e.g DVLA, 2018-2019), this is due to data being unavailable as a result of changes to the learning system where records have not been transferred.

## ■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Coronavirus

**John Nicolson:**

[\[78722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the DVLA on the (a) disruption caused to their services and (b) steps being taken to resume services following the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has remained open throughout the pandemic and its online services have operated as normal. There has been no disruption to online services and there are no delays for applications made online.

Paper applications must by their nature be dealt with onsite and the DVLA has reconfigured its office space to accommodate more operational staff within the two metre social distancing requirements in Wales.

The DVLA has also accelerated the development of new online services to further reduce paper applications and has launched a publicity campaign to further encourage the use of online services. Ministers are regularly briefed on the latest position as it relates to the DVLA's services.

**■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Finance****Ruth Cadbury:**[\[78696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for the DVLA.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The DVLA's vehicle excise duty collection and enforcement activities are funded by the Department for Transport. The DVLA is required to cover all other operating costs through statutory fees and wider commercial (non-statutory) charges.

**■ Driving Licences: Applications****John Spellar:**[\[77507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the backlog is for applications for (a) new and (b) renewal of driving licences; and what steps he is taking to tackle that backlog.

**John Spellar:**[\[77508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the backlog is for applications for (a) new and (b) renewal of vehicle licences; and what steps he is taking to tackle that backlog.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence or to pay vehicle excise duty is to use the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services. These have continued to work well throughout the pandemic and there is no backlog for applications made online. The DVLA has processed more than 36 million online driver and vehicle transactions since March, including issuing nearly two million driving licences.

The number of paper driving licence applications waiting to be processed fluctuates on a daily basis as licences are issued and new applications received. There are no backlogs of vehicle licence applications.

## ■ Driving Tests

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[83659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test appointments on 14 September will be made available in (a) Poole, (b) Southampton and (c) Salisbury; for what reason it is not possible to reopen the test centre at Gillam road in Bournemouth to help meet demand; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

From 14 September 2020, there will be a up to approximately 700 practical driving tests available in Poole, Southampton and Salisbury. The number of tests available is likely to change depending on driving examiner availability.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) will be extending the period in which tests are available from 6 weeks to 18 weeks ahead from 14 September 2020. This will add over 375,000 more test appointments between 14 September 2020 and the end of January 2021.

The DVSA will not re-open Bournemouth driving test centre (DTC) to help meet demand. On 12 August 2019, the DVSA took the difficult decision not to re-open Bournemouth DTC. This is because the property is in a poor state and the DVSA judges the cost of repairing it would be too high.

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[83660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving test appointments the DVSA made on (a) 21 August 2020 and (b) 25 August 2020; how many appointment applicants were unsuccessful on each day; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On 21 August 2020, 10,637 driving test appointments were successfully booked and on 25 August 2020, 2,150 driving test appointments were successfully booked. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) does not hold data on how many applicants were unsuccessful booking a practical driving test.

The DVSA's online booking service reopened to the general public on 26 August 2020, following essential maintenance, and again on 1 September 2020. A limited number of tests were available on both dates. Once these test slots were booked the DVSA closed the online booking system. It will reopen again at 8am on 7 September 2020, when more tests will be available. The DVSA is planning to make around 375,000 tests available on 14 September 2020.

## ■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[83760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support people who had their driving tests cancelled as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

Practical car driving tests in England resumed on 22 July 2020. From 16 July 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) began inviting candidates by email, who had a test cancelled and put on hold owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, to choose their preferred location, date and time. For those candidates whose email address failed, the DVSA sent them a text message, where the agency had a mobile number for them.

**■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[78538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the merits of area-wide tenders of public electric vehicle charge points in The Netherlands and elsewhere to secure the coverage required to support the electric vehicle transition.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Government always carefully follows international developments and, where appropriate, looks to learn lessons for its approach in the UK. This is supported by our membership of the international Zero Emission Vehicle Alliance, which includes other leading countries and jurisdictions such as the Netherlands, California and Norway. In the UK the Government has taken the approach that the roll out of electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints should be market led with specific targeted support for certain areas such as the On-street Recharging Scheme (ORCS), the Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) and the public-private £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund (CIIF). We are drawing on international experience, for example in our support of a roaming solution to enable easy payment for EV charging. As we move towards mass transition for electric vehicles the Government will carefully consider what further measures can be taken to ensure the roll out of a comprehensive charging network.

**■ Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance****Sarah Olney:**[\[83898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his time frame is for responding to requests for Government funding to provide for a temporary bridge and repairs to Hammersmith bridge.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department wants to see the Hammersmith Bridge opened as soon as safely possible, so that – at a minimum – people can cycle and walk across the bridge.

We recognise the situation needs to be resolved as soon as possible for the benefit of commuters and local residents.

To ensure progress is made quickly we are working with all relevant stakeholders to enable us to move forward.

## ■ High Speed Two: Apprentices

**Christian Wakeford:**

[\[77862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps High Speed Two Ltd is taking with (a) further and (b) higher education institutions to employ apprentices.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

HS2 Ltd and its supply chain continue to work closely with higher education institutions to support degree level apprenticeships as well as a range of other employer and outreach work, and are working closely with both further education (FE) institutions (including Derby, Moulton, Solihull, and Walsall colleges, and the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure) and higher education (HE) institutions (such as Anglia Ruskin, Aston, Birmingham Metropolitan, Coventry, Loughborough, Sheffield Hallam, and Wolverhampton Universities) to meet the aims of the HS2 Skills, Employment and Education Strategy

As part of their contractual requirements, HS2 Ltd's supply chain is contractually required to deliver skills, employment and education outputs. As well as creating apprenticeships, these include supporting unemployed people into work; creating opportunities for work placements; and delivering school engagement activities including school age work experience. In much of this work there is a focus on supporting individuals from under-represented groups.

Recent activities have included:

- Attending career and apprenticeship fairs across the country at various institutions this year (pre-lockdown);
- HS2 Ltd assisting in the development of the T level qualification in Construction: Design, Surveying and Planning;
- Supporting Aston University's Diversity in the Commercial World event in February 2020;
- HS2 Ltd and Tier 1 contractors sitting on the Employer and Partnership Boards of various educational institutions;
- Balfour Beatty Vinci (Main Works Contractor) working with Walsall College to deliver their first T level in Construction: Design, Surveying and Planning;
- HS2 Ltd with Tier 1 contractors working with Coventry University's Director for Quantity Surveying, Commercial Management and Construction Management degrees to develop a package of support for undergraduates;

HS2 Ltd has worked closely with the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure (previously National College for High Speed Rail). Since 2017, they have sent 69% of their apprentices to the college to study level 4 and 5 programmes in Project Management and Leadership & Management. A number of their supply chain companies, including BBV, LM, Systra, CSjv, Align, WSP, ACI, Arup, Jacobs, Bechtel and Atkins have apprentices at the College.

## ■ Latvia: Coronavirus

**Christian Matheson:**

[\[78710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to include Latvia on the list of countries who do not require self-isolation upon arrival back into the UK; and what criteria will be used to make a decision.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

Latvia was added to the Travel Corridor list on 28 July 2020.

## ■ Lifeboats: Coronavirus

**Anthony Mangnall:**

[\[77815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will reimburse independent lifeboats for costs incurred during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

I recognise the valuable services provided by independent lifeboats in ensuring the safety of local communities, and appreciate the scale of the challenge facing smaller maritime operators from Covid-19.

The financial impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic cannot be underestimated. To support businesses and employees, HMG has responded with an unprecedented £330 billion of financial measures.

Charities, including independent lifeboats, are playing a crucial role in the national fight against Covid-19, backed up by an army of volunteers. In recognition of the vital services that charities provide, HMG has also made substantial funding available to ensure they can continue to deliver key services that many people rely upon.

Comprehensive guidance has been published to highlight these grant opportunities for charities, and to ensure that volunteers can continue to undertake their roles safely.

## ■ Motorcycles: Safety Barriers

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[77851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve motorcyclist safety in relation to safety barriers installed on carriageways.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The provision and maintenance of safety barriers on carriageways, for the protection of all road users, is a matter for the relevant Highways Authorities within England and Devolved Administrations.

The Department promotes Motorcycle safety awareness more generally through the THINK! Campaign.

## ■ Ports

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[77541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) financial and (b) non financial resources his Department has allocated to (a) Humber Ports and (b) other UK ports to prepare for the end of the transition period.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

As part of the Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity (PIRC) fund in 2019, the ports of Hull and Immingham successfully bid to receive £1.4m between them to support preparations for leaving the European Union. The total amount of funding to successful applicants through this fund was £10m, with a maximum of £1m to any single port.

As part of preparations for the end of the Transition Period on 31 December 2020, on 12 July the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster announced funding of up to £705m for new infrastructure, jobs and technology at the border. This includes up to £470m to build port and inland infrastructure needed for new customs procedures and controls. Further details of how ports can apply to access this funding will be provided in due course.

## ■ Railways: Capital Investment

**Liam Byrne:** [\[84151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76602, what the timescale is for publishing the plan for integrated rail investment.

**Andrew Stephenson:**

The Department plans to publish the Integrated Rail Plan for North and Midlands by the end of the year following the publication of the National Infrastructure Commission's Rail Needs Assessment.

## ■ Railways: Coronavirus

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[78510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the frequency of rail services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

As we are extending our plan to lift the remaining national restrictive measures, we have asked the rail industry to increase the number of services they run. Rail operators continue to assess local demand regularly and take the necessary steps to deliver the services passengers need. From 7 September, the railway will operate approximately 92% of its pre-pandemic levels of service, providing a more frequent train service for passengers.

**■ Railways: Fares****Catherine McKinnell:**[\[83804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of rail fares reform in order to (a) reduce overcrowding, (b) better spread passenger demand throughout the day, (c) improve passenger perception of value for money and (d) increase the number of rail passenger journeys.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is committed to transforming our railways and building on the detailed, evidence based priorities Keith Williams set out. Covid-19 has had a clear impact across the sector and we are considering how best to deliver reform including fares reform in light of the unique challenges posed by Covid-19.

The Government recognises that Covid-19 has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behavior.

In order to support a green recovery and new working patterns, the Department is working with industry to explore options for flexible commuters, such as carnets, and what steps could be taken quickly to make these as useful and convenient for passengers as possible.

**Catherine McKinnell:**[\[83805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) rail fares reform and (b) different pricing for rail (i) leisure passengers, (ii) business passengers and (iii) commuters.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is committed to transforming our railways and building on the detailed, evidence based priorities Keith Williams set out. Covid-19 has had a clear impact across the sector and we are considering how best to deliver reform including fares reform in light of the unique challenges posed by Covid-19.

The Government recognises that Covid-19 has caused a fundamental change in working patterns and that this could have long-term effects on commuter behaviour.

In order to support a green recovery and new working patterns, the Department is working with industry to explore options for flexible commuters, such as carnets, and what steps could be taken quickly to make these as useful and convenient for passengers as possible.

**Catherine McKinnell:**[\[83806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential for rail fares reform to increase the number of additional journeys that could be undertaken by rail; and if he will make an estimate of the number of those additional rail journeys that would be (a) new journeys, (b) taken by rail instead of (i) car and (ii) of air.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government is committed to transforming our railways and building on the detailed, evidence based priorities Keith Williams set out. We want to create a railway

that puts passengers first, where passengers know who is in charge, that delivers a fairer ticketing system and which delivers value for money.

Covid-19 has had a clear impact across the sector and we are considering how best to deliver reform including fares reform in light of the unique challenges posed by Covid-19.

### ■ Railways: Passengers

**John Spellar:** [\[83665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of potential trends in the level of future rail passenger numbers on (a) suburban commuter and (b) intercity routes.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Passenger journeys fell sharply in March, and remained at 5% of last year's levels for most of April and May. They have since recovered to about 30% of last year's journey levels for most of August.

Our priority remains the safety of staff and passengers. We work with rail operators to ensure passengers have the confidence to return to the railway, and continue to take all necessary measures to make rail travel safe.

### ■ Railways: Urban Areas

**Sir John Hayes:** [\[78511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to connect more towns to the railway network.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Government plans to modernise the network, improve services and reconnect towns that no longer have a station or link. The Government has pledged £500million to start reopening lines and stations, reconnecting smaller communities, regenerating local economies and improving access to jobs, homes and education.

### ■ Road Traffic Control: Coronavirus

**John Spellar:** [\[83667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimates his Department has made of changes in the level of local air pollution as a result of traffic jams caused by road closures put in place in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Rachel Maclean:**

During lockdown, short term behaviour changes saw nitrogen dioxide pollution at the roadside almost halved as a result of reduced emissions from traffic, with much smaller reductions observed for particulate matters in urban areas.

As we recover from Covid 19, we remain committed to our ambitious aims to make long term improvements to air quality and support zero emission forms of travel.

In the current climate, the Government has strongly encouraged local authorities to prioritise support for walking and cycling with measures that include pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling and widened pavements. The Department for Transport has issued guidance for local authorities on reallocating road space in response to the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure that these new measures are implemented in a way that meets local needs.

**John Spellar:**

[\[84145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of road closures introduced under emergency provisions during the covid-19 outbreak on local congestion; and how much funding has been provided to local authorities for those closures.

**Rachel Maclean:**

In May, the Government announced £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking. £225 million is being made available to local authorities in 2020-21 via the Emergency Active Travel Fund to invest in new cycling and walking infrastructure, including road closures where appropriate.

Local authorities are free to make their own decisions about the streets under their care, provided they take account of the relevant legislation. They are responsible for ensuring that their actions are within the law and are accountable to local people for their decisions and their performance. Local councillors are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people.

## ■ Shipping: Renewable Fuels

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[78540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding research and development to support a shift to sustainable fuels in the maritime sector.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Secretary of State for Transport has not held any recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in relation to this issue.

There are regular, official-level discussions on this matter occurring in the context of the forthcoming Spending Review.

## ■ Taxis: Licensing

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[83693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to reform taxi and private hire licensing.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department is supporting licensing authorities to make use of their extensive existing powers through the recently issued Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle

Standards and will consult on updated best practice guidance on other matters later this year.

### ■ **Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Rail Franchise**

**Dr Rupa Huq:** [\[82208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to split up the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern rail franchise.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Department continues to consider options for the future of the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise. Transport for London (TfL) has submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the devolution of the Great Northern Inner Suburban services. The Department has asked their officials to work with TfL to develop this proposal further. Any option proposed must be in the interests of all passengers and the tax-payer, aligning itself with the future plans of the TSGN network and industry reforms.

### ■ **Transport: Trade Unions**

**John Spellar:** [\[83666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he last held meetings with representatives of trade unions representing transport workers.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

The Secretary of State met representatives from RMT on 26<sup>th</sup> June. Junior Ministers from the Department are in regular contact with representatives from the trade unions.

### ■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[77530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of lifting quarantine restrictions on travellers from Madeira as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

**Kelly Tolhurst:**

The Government added Portugal to the Travel Corridor list on 22 August. This includes Madeira and the Azores.

## TREASURY

### ■ **Bakery Products: VAT**

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[78634\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to pasties baked for sale by retailers where there is no intention that they be consumed hot, they are not cooked to order, are not kept hot after cooking, are

advertised merely as freshly baked, and are provided to customers in a simple standard paper bag.

**Jesse Norman:**

VAT raised £130 billion in 2019-20 and is an important source of revenue for the Exchequer, funding the Government's spending priorities including hospitals, schools, and defence.

VAT is levied on supplies of hot takeaway food. "Hot food" is food that is supplied and intended to be eaten when hot (above ambient air temperature). However, some takeaway food may be zero rated if it is not intended to be eaten hot and is sold warm simply because it happens to be freshly baked and is in the process of cooling down. Therefore, freshly baked takeaway pasties that are not intended to be eaten hot are zero rated.

While all taxes are kept under review, there are currently no plans to change the rate of VAT applied to pasties.

■ **Beer: Excise Duties**

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[83747\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of removing Small Brewers Relief on the viability of small and medium sized brewers.

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[84210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what impact assessment his Department has undertaken on consumer choice as a result of changing Small Brewers Relief.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Small Brewers Relief will not be removed for small and medium sized breweries under the Government's proposed reforms.

Over 80% of all breweries will not experience any changes, therefore the Government considers small brewers will continue to prosper.

Medium-sized brewers will benefit from the smoother transition to the main duty rate offered by the Government's reforms, and so the Government expects their viability to increase.

Accordingly, the Government expects consumer choice to increase as smaller breweries find it easier to expand and are not limited by arbitrary 'cliff-edges'.

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[83748\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many small and medium sized Brewers in each (a) nation and (b) region qualified for Small Brewers Relief in financial year 2019-20.

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[83749\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse has been of the Small Brewers Relief scheme in each of the last five years.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

HMRC publishes annual statistics on Small Brewers Relief, this includes the total number of people claiming the relief and the cost of the relief. Information on the location of Brewers receiving the relief is not readily available.

**Grahame Morris:**[\[83759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of small breweries operating between 2,100 hectoliters and 5,000 hectoliters, that will be financially disadvantaged by the proposed reform of the Small Brewer Relief.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Treasury has been reviewing Small Brewers Relief since 2018. As announced to Parliament in July, the Treasury has concluded the first stage of the review and set out its findings.

The Treasury continues to work with industry on the impact of those changes and will consult later this year on further aspects of reforming the relief, including the shape of the new taper. Responses to the consultation will allow for more detailed assessment of the impact of the changes and the results of the consultation will help determine what rate of duty relief breweries will be entitled to as they grow.

In order to provide time for brewers to adapt, final changes will not come into effect until at least 1 January 2022.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[83987\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of small breweries that will pay a higher rate of duty under the proposed changes to Small Breweries' Relief.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[83988\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the rate of duty relief for small breweries under his proposed changes to Small Breweries' Relief for breweries producing (a) 2,100hl-3,000hl, (b) 3,001hl-4,000hl and (c) 4,001hl-5000hl.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[83989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what rate of duty relief small breweries between 5,000hl and 10,000hl will receive under his proposed changes to Small Breweries' Relief.

**Owen Thompson:**[\[83990\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of delaying changes to Small Breweries' Relief due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Treasury has been reviewing Small Brewers Relief since 2018. As announced to Parliament in July, the Treasury has concluded the first stage of the review and set out its findings.

The Treasury will consult later this year on further aspects of reforming the relief, including the shape of the new taper. The results of this consultation will help determine what rate of duty breweries will face as they grow.

In order to provide time for brewers to adapt, final changes will not come into effect until at least 1 January 2022.

## ■ **Betting: Television**

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[84164\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government has taken to help regulate the advertising of spread-betting sites across television channels; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Government takes the issue of consumer protection in relation to spread betting very seriously. Spread bets are subject to financial regulation, and as such the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) ensures consumers are properly informed and protected from any harms that arise from them.

On 1 July 2019, the FCA published Policy Statement (PS)19/18 that finalised rules restricting the sale, marketing and distribution of contract for differences (CFDs) and CFD-like options to retail clients in or from the UK. This includes spread bets. These rules include the mandatory inclusion of standardised risk warnings, and restrictions on the monetary and non-monetary incentives that can encourage retail customers to buy these products, when marketing them.

More broadly, the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code) restricts spread betting adverts so that they can only be placed on specialist financial channels or in the breaks between programming that is on financial issues.

## ■ **Boilers: VAT**

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[78748\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to the installation of oil-fired boilers as part of grant-funded energy efficiency schemes in the homes of people in receipt of War Disablement Pension.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under current VAT rules, the installation of oil-fired boilers as part of grant-funded energy efficiency schemes in the homes of people in receipt of War Disablement Pension is subject to the reduced rate of VAT. The Government has no plans to change this VAT treatment at this time.

## ■ **Business: Government Assistance**

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[77741\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to monitor the economic effect of its covid-19 business support packages; and what the timeframe is

for the introduction of the proposed business rates relief support scheme to bring the food and drink wholesale sector into line with their customers in the hospitality, tourism and retail sector.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is keeping the support measures, including their effect on businesses and the economy, under constant review.

The Government has provided enhanced support through business rates relief to businesses occupying properties used for retail, hospitality and leisure given the direct and acute impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on those sectors.

A range of other measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as wholesalers, has also been made available. 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.

■ **Charities: Advertising**

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[78639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to amend the rate of VAT applied to advertising services for charities.

**Jesse Norman:**

Under the current VAT rules, charities benefit from a zero rate of VAT on costs of advertising in public media when the supply is made by a third party. The Government has no plans to change this VAT treatment at this time.

■ **Companies: Coronavirus**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[77560\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish (a) the conditions relating to climate and greenhouse gas emissions attached to Project Birch funding, (b) the process and evidence base that were used when setting the terms of those conditions, (c) the procedures in place to monitor recipient companies' compliance with those conditions, and (d) the penalties attached to non-compliance with those conditions.

**Jesse Norman:**

Alongside the focus on supporting the economy at this time, the Government continues to take its environmental responsibilities very seriously.

Companies receiving support as a Last Resort Business Intervention will also need to agree to appropriate conditions, including those on climate.

## ■ Companies: Regulation

**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**

[\[81587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to regulate company formation agents.

**John Glen:**

Company formation service providers are regulated entities under the UK's Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017. The Regulations set out the high-level requirements on regulated firms to combat money laundering and ensure that key professionals identify their customers, understand the purpose behind transactions including the source of funds and have policies, controls and procedures in place to mitigate against the risks of money laundering and terrorism financing they face.

As a regulated entity under the Regulations, company formation service providers must be registered with an anti-money laundering supervisor. Anti-money laundering supervisors must effectively monitor the compliance of regulated entities they supervise. In December 2018, the Financial Action Task Force, the global standard-setter for anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing (AML/CTF), published its Mutual Evaluation Report of the United Kingdom. It recognised that the UK's AML/CTF regime is the strongest of over sixty countries assessed by FATF and its regional bodies to date.

## ■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Angela Crawley:**

[\[77695\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to extend the availability of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to people with blood cancer who have been shielding and (a) cannot work from home and (b) have been advised to continue shielding from August 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government recognises the challenges facing those with cancer, and the current level of unprecedented support for people's incomes is available for those who are living with cancer. This includes the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

The Chancellor announced on 12 May that the CJRS scheme will be extended until October.

Before 30 June, any employee could be furloughed. From 1 July, an employee can only continue to be furloughed if they have previously been furloughed for at least 3 consecutive weeks taking place any time between 1 March 2020 and 30 June.

For those required to shield after 1 August, they will receive letters/notification advising them of this, and they will continue to be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay on the basis of their shielding status.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[78720\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2020 to Question 56027, how many subject access requests under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2000 were received by HMRC in relation to payments claimed or made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; how many and what proportion of those access requests were granted; and what the average time was for responding to those requests.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[78721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many subject access requests under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2000 have been received by HMRC in relation to payments claimed or made under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

As of 21 August, HMRC have received five Subject Access Requests (SARs) relating to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Two have been granted and the remaining three are under consideration.

The first two SARs took six weeks to complete. HMRC have now implemented a new process for SARs relating to the CJRS and aim to complete requests within 28 days.

**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Travel****Alex Norris:** [\[84335\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 73946 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Travel, what businesses and representatives groups from the leisure coach industry Ministers from his Department have met with since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

Treasury ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

**■ Credit****Stella Creasy:** [\[84221\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76681, how many (a) high cost credit, (b) log book loan, (c) BNPL, (d) credit card, (d) personal loan, and (e) credit companies have been prosecuted under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

**John Glen:**

This question has been passed on to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The FCA will reply to directly to the honourable Member by letter. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

**■ Digital Technology: Taxation****Chi Onwurah:**[\[77610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75294 on Digital Technology: Taxation, what steps he is taking to engage with his US counterpart on a global digital tax solution since that Administration's withdrawal from discussions at OECD level.

**Jesse Norman:**

The UK, US, and other international partners remain engaged in OECD discussions on a global digital tax solution.

Beyond this, Government ministers and officials maintain regular contact with the US administration on a range of issues.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[84236\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what companies are in scope of the Digital Services Tax; and what other forms of taxation are applicable to such companies.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Digital Services Tax applies to revenues generated from the provision of search engines, social media platforms, or online marketplaces to UK users. The requirement to maintain taxpayer confidentiality means it is not possible to disclose which specific businesses will be subject to the tax.

Businesses in scope of the Digital Services Tax may also be subject to Corporation Tax, employer NICs, and other taxes, depending on their activities.

**■ Economic Situation: Ministerial Responsibility****Chi Onwurah:**[\[83797\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Government Minister is responsible for overseeing the (a) Government's economic strategy and (b) the Governments levelling up agenda; and how frequently cross-departmental discussions are held on that strategy.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Treasury's objectives include increasing employment and productivity, ensuring strong growth and competitiveness across all regions of the UK, through a comprehensive package of structural reforms, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by leaving the EU. Treasury Ministers and officials regularly meet other departments in support of this objective to help level up opportunity across the country.

## ■ Employment

**Jeremy Wright:**

[\[77543\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Plan for Jobs, published in July 2020, if he will extend (a) eligibility for the £1,000 bonus to employers who re-employ new starters who were not retained during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) an additional £1,000 bonus to those new starters directly.

**Jesse Norman:**

Further information on the Bonus has been published at the end of July, including the eligibility criteria. Full guidance will be published by the end of September. Regarding labour retention and new starters, the relevant criteria is that the employee must have been continuously employed until 31 January 2021 and still be employed by the same employer as of 31 January 2021; and, not be serving a contractual or statutory notice period, that started before 1 February 2021, for the employer making a claim.

The Government's comprehensive response to the COVID-19 outbreak ensures that there is a wide range of support available for those who may have not been retained by their employers. These include a £1,000 a year increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1 billion increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants.

## ■ Employment: Coronavirus

**Gill Furniss:**

[\[77736\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of targeting Government funding towards areas with (a) a relatively higher unemployment rate and (b) fewer job centres and other social infrastructure that are vulnerable to the economic impact of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government has announced unprecedented support for businesses and workers across the country, in recognition of the impact of COVID-19. The Plan for Jobs will support employment across the whole country, including doubling the number of work coaches in Job Centre Plus, as well as through the Flexible Support Fund, which is delivered at a local level through Job Centre Plus branches and allocated based on local needs, and through the Rapid Response Service, which can be mobilised rapidly anywhere in the country to help provide immediate support to employees at risk of redundancy. These measures are designed to ensure that areas most vulnerable to the economic impact of the crisis are given the support they need.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[78739\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support will be made available to shielding people who are unable to work from home and whose places of work cannot be made covid-19-safe by 1 August 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

From 1 August the Government has relaxed national advice to those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), bringing it in line with the advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. The advice to the CEV is still to stay at home as much as possible. However, if the CEV are unable to work from home, they will be able to return, provided their workplace is COVID-safe.

It is important that this group continue to take careful precautions, and employers should do all they can to enable them to work from home where this is possible, including moving them to another role if required. Where this is not possible, the CEV should be provided with the safest onsite roles that enable them to maintain social distancing from others.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the CEV will continue to have access to an unprecedented package of financial support. This is not limited to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and includes the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £9.3bn according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates.

**Financial Conduct Authority: Complaints****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[81902\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many complaints have been received through the FCA Complaints System; and how many complaints in relation to the conduct of the FCA Supervision team have been recorded in the last five calendar years.

**John Glen:**

Information relating to the number of complaints received by the FCA was published in the FCA's response to the Complaints Commissioner's Annual Report in July 2020. This information is available on the FCA's website.

**Food: VAT****Scott Mann:**[\[77712\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether (a) ice cream served from an ice cream van and (b) other takeaway cold foods are eligible for the reduced rate of VAT for the hospitality industry.

**Jesse Norman:**

Cold takeaway food, for example sandwiches, is zero-rated, provided it is not of a type that is always standard rated such as ice cream, potato crisps, sweets, some beverages and bottled water. The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced to support the tourism and hospitality sectors and will help over 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs. Ice cream served for consumption on the premises in ice cream parlours or other food establishments will benefit from the reduced rate.

**■ Free Zones**

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[83774\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons his Department did not renew freeport licenses by Statutory Instrument when they expired in 2012.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[83775\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of freeports on the risk of money laundering and tax evasion in the UK.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[83776\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of freeports on job displacement.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[83777\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what lessons his Department has learnt from the previous incarnation of freeports, from 1984 to 2012, that he plans to implement when establishing new freeports.

**Steve Barclay:**

Pre-2012 UK Freeports model was were not well used, in large part because they offered limited only basic customs benefits and were in fixed locations inside ports.

The government has consulted on the introduction of a new Freeport model which will include a wider package of policy measures, including customs measures and tariff benefits, tax reliefs and planning freedoms to boost trade, regenerate deprived communities and promote innovation. The consultation closed on 13 July, and the responses are currently being carefully considered.

The government will ensure all the necessary safeguards are in place to minimise any risk of money laundering and tax evasion and will continue to meet international standards. The government's consultation response will set out more detail on this, as well as on how any risk of harmful job displacement will be managed.

**■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: Scotland**

**Alan Brown:** [\[82108\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what Barnett Consequential funding will be allocated to the Scottish Government from the Green Homes Grant scheme.

**Steve Barclay:**

As part of the Plan for Jobs, the Chancellor announced over £3 billion of new funding for green buildings, including a £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to upgrade people's homes. This funding is subject to the Barnett formula. We are working closely with the devolved administrations to ensure they have the best information about likely changes in Barnett funding to facilitate their financial planning.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

**Tracy Brabin:**

[\[84321\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the wedding industry is able to access suitable and affordable insurance for potential delays and cancellations due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**John Glen:**

Wedding operators may be eligible for assistance through the wider Government support package if they are in financial difficulty.

Ideally all firms would be able to purchase the insurance products they need on a market basis, but the Government recognises that in some exceptional circumstances that may not be possible. The Government is committed to ensuring firms have access to a range of financial products that suit their needs and is keeping this situation under review.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: VAT

**Alan Brown:**

[\[84292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to allow refunds of VAT to be claimed where paid in advance at the standard rate covering the period of the newly introduced VAT reduction between 15 July 2020 and 12 January 2021 for (a) caravan site fees and (b) other businesses in the hospitality and hotel and holiday accommodation sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Jesse Norman:**

All businesses that benefit from the temporary reduced rate are able to apply the reduced rate to advance bookings that take place between 15 July 2020 and 12 January 2021. The Government encourages businesses to pass on the saving wherever possible, but it is a decision for them whether to do that or to use the money to support their trading.

Further detail on the application of the reduced rate can be found in Revenue and Customs Brief: Guidance on the temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality, holiday accommodation and attractions, on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenue-and-customs-brief-10-2020-temporary-reduced-rate-of-vat-for-hospitality-holiday-accommodation-and-attractions/guidance-on-the-temporary-reduced-rate-of-vat-for-hospitality-holiday-accommodation-and-attractions>

## ■ Housing: Energy

**Alan Brown:**

[\[82123\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his oral contribution of 8 July 2020, Official Report, col 973, what plans he has to develop a long term programme with additional funding to improve the energy efficiency of housing across all tenures; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises the importance of energy efficiency in achieving our decarbonisation and fuel poverty objectives. That is why the Chancellor recently announced a package of over £3 billion to upgrade homes and public sector buildings. This could support 140,000 green jobs, upgrade 650,000 homes and public sector buildings, and save households hundreds of pounds on their energy bills.

This new funding represents a significant and accelerated down payment on decarbonising buildings, to help stimulate the economic recovery and create green jobs. Allocations for future years will be determined at the Spending Review in the Autumn.

The Government uses a range of levers to meet its environmental objectives. For example, the Future Homes Standard, to be introduced by 2025, will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency.

**■ Leisure: Coronavirus****Afzal Khan:**[\[82355\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support he has made available to public leisure services during their closure as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

During this difficult time the Treasury is working intensively with employers, delivery partners, industry groups and other government departments to understand the long-term effects of social distancing across all key areas of the economy.

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like public leisure.

That is why the Chancellor has already announced unprecedented support during this pandemic for individuals and businesses, to protect against the current economic emergency. This includes changes to our welfare system including Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay; and the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

Where eligible, certain public leisure services may further have benefited from the business rates holiday; the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Fund; and the Discretionary Grant fund.

The Government has provided a comprehensive package of support for councils to help with their response to Covid-19. Over £3.7bn in additional grant funding has been announced for councils in England, which can be used flexibly across all their services. On 2nd July, the Government also announced an income guarantee scheme which will reimburse 75% of eligible irrecoverable income from sales, fees and charges, above 5% of planned income for 2020/21.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support with regard to supporting public services, businesses, individuals, and sectors such as public leisure as we respond to this pandemic

## ■ Mortgages: Coronavirus

**Clive Efford:**

[\[77503\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that the credit ratings of homeowners who have taken mortgage holidays during the covid-19 outbreak are not negatively affected.

**John Glen:**

On 20 March, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published guidance on what it expects mortgage lenders to do for consumers facing financial difficulties as a result of COVID-19.

As part of this guidance, the FCA requires that the arrears status on credit files should be masked to minimise the negative impacts that consumers might otherwise experience from taking a payment holiday. This was reconfirmed in the FCA's updated guidance published on 2 June and continues to be the case for any borrower taking a payment holiday until 31 October 2020.

When considering new loan or credit applications, lenders will look at a range of factors, not just a borrower's credit file. This could include a customer's income and future ability to make repayments, which may have been affected by COVID-19.

Officials continue to have discussions with the FCA and credit reference agencies on these matters.

**Dr Julian Lewis:**

[\[83654\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to ensure that mortgage lenders follow official guidance and look favourably on loan applications during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Chancellor and I are in regular discussions with mortgage lenders regarding the availability of competitive mortgage products on the market and to encourage lenders to assess applications for these products fairly considering the unprecedented circumstances.

Beyond these discussions, the assessment of mortgage loan applications are commercial decisions and the Government does not seek to intervene. When assessing loan applications, lenders consider several factors such as market conditions, the funding they possess and the applicant's affordability.

**Ben Lake:**

[\[83911\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending mortgage repayment holidays during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ben Lake:** [83912]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Conduct Authority on repayment options for mortgage borrowers.

**Ben Lake:** [83913]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to protect mortgage borrowers' credit history following the end of mortgage payment holidays.

**John Glen:**

The Government is working closely with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) on next steps for mortgage payment holidays. Currently borrowers that are in financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19 can take out a new 3-month mortgage holiday until 31 October 2020. Those that have already taken a 3-month payment holiday, can also extend this for a further 3 months until 31 October 2020 under the FCA's current guidance.

The FCA recently published their consultation document on next steps for mortgage holidays, which can be found here: <https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/guidance-consultation/mortgages-and-coronavirus-additional-guidance-for-firms.pdf>. Based on responses from this consultation the FCA, alongside Government, plan to set out next steps in due course.

We recognise that a mortgage holiday is not the right solution for everyone, and where consumers have taken a mortgage holiday and can afford to re-start payments, it is in their best interest to do so. There are also a number of other forbearance options available to borrowers through their lender if they are struggling to keep up with their mortgage payments. Borrowers who are worried about their financial situation should get in touch with their lender as soon as possible.

The FCA requires that there should be no worsening of arrears status on a consumer's credit file as a result of taking out a payment holiday. This was reconfirmed in the FCA's updated guidance published in June and continues to be the case for any borrower taking a payment holiday until 31 October 2020.

However, it is important to remember that when borrowers apply for new credit, lenders will continue to carry out affordability assessments which uses a range of information beyond a credit file. This will include an analysis of income and expenditure, to assess future ability to make repayments, which may have been affected by COVID-19.

## ■ Non-domestic Rates

**Helen Hayes:** [77722]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent progress has been made on the Government's review of business rates.

**Nadia Whittome:****[78937]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on the Business Rates Review; and what the timetable is for the next steps of that review.

**Jesse Norman:**

On 21 July, HM Treasury published a Call for Evidence for the fundamental review of business rates. The Call for Evidence invites stakeholders to contribute their views on ideas for reform on all elements of the business rates system and on alternative taxes.

As set out in the Call for Evidence, the fundamental review will have an interim report in autumn 2020, ahead of concluding in spring 2021.

The Call for Evidence can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hm-treasury-fundamental-review-of-business-rates-call-for-evidence](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hm-treasury-fundamental-review-of-business-rates-call-for-evidence).

**■ Non-domestic Rates: Empty Property****Greg Clark:****[84178]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to further support landlords of commercial properties by extending the Business Rates Expanded Retail Discount to owners of vacant retail premises.

**Jesse Norman:**

Properties which were closed temporarily due to the Government's advice on COVID-19 should be treated as occupied for the purposes of the business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure properties.

The Government maintains an Empty Property Relief (EPR) to support property owners between the reoccupation of vacated premises. Under EPR, owners of retail properties do not normally have to pay business rates on newly vacated buildings for three months.

**■ Occupational Pensions****Jonathan Reynolds:****[78653]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of reforming RPI to align with CPIH on employee pensions in (a) 2025 and (b) 2030.

**John Glen:**

The Retail Prices Index (RPI) is a measure of inflation with a number of shortcomings. To address these shortcomings, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) has made a proposal to reform RPI by bringing the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into RPI. Owing to the use of RPI in specific index-linked gilts, prior to 2030 the Chancellor's consent to this proposal is required before it can be implemented.

At the Budget in March, the government and UKSA launched a consultation to consider whether UKSA's proposal should be implemented at a date other than 2030, and, if so, when between 2025 and 2030. The consultation closed for responses on 21 August. As part of the consultation, the government has sought views on the broader impacts of the proposed reform of RPI.

The government and UKSA will respond to the consultation in the autumn.

## ■ Overseas Trade

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[77590\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many (a) ports, (b) roll-on/roll-off locations, (c) rail terminals and (d) airports are customs approved areas.

**Jesse Norman:**

The number of frontier locations currently approved as customs approved areas to receive or dispatch freight from outside of the UK are:

|     | PORTS (INCLUDING THE 21 RORO LISTED LOCATIONS)                                    |
|-----|---|
| 77  |   |
| 179 | Wharves   |
| 6   | Rail Terminals  |
| 37  | Customs & Excise (C&E) Designated Airports  |
| 10  | Non-C&E Designated Airports (including 8 approved to import aircraft not freight) |

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[77591\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made the average time it will take for a frontier location to become a customs approved area.

**Jesse Norman:**

The time required to become a customs approved area will depend on the unique circumstances of individual locations.

HM Revenue and Customs and Border Force are working to ensure that appropriate approvals will be in place by the end of the transition period.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[77592\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) rail terminals, (b) airports and (c) pipeline operators that require temporary customs approvals.

**Jesse Norman:**

About 10 rail terminals are expected to require temporary approvals.

Airports that receive or dispatch freight from outside of the UK should already be a customs approved area so will not require temporary customs approvals. Pipeline operators will receive full customs approvals for January 2021.

**Paul Blomfield:**

[77594]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what arrangements have been made through the Border Operating Model to help traders unfamiliar with customs procedures to make entries into their own records.

**Jesse Norman:**

Traders importing standard goods into Great Britain from the EU between 1 January and 30 June 2021 can make a record in their own commercial records at the point of entry of goods into Great Britain and then follow this with a supplementary declaration which must be submitted to HMRC within six months of the point of import. They will need to record details of the goods in their commercial records, including information such as the classification, value, and weight of the goods. In order to make a delayed supplementary declaration, the importer will need to become authorised to use customs simplified procedures or appoint an agent that is authorised. Further information can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/declaring-goods-brought-into-great-britain-from-the-eu-from-1-january-2021>.

The vast majority of the UK's rest of world traders use an agent or intermediary to comply with customs formalities and manage their logistics and transport needs. Based on this, the Government expects that intermediaries will play an essential role as the majority of UK businesses trading with the EU will want to use their services to facilitate the import/export process.

The UK has a well-established industry of customs intermediaries which serve British businesses. The sector is varied and made up of a number of different business models including specific customs brokers, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators. HMG has recently announced an additional £50 million of grant scheme support for the sector to increase capacity, in addition to the £34 million of support made available so far.

The £50 million support package will boost the capacity of the customs intermediary sector to help provide businesses with further support ahead of the new processes taking effect from January 2021. Those who currently complete or intend to complete customs declarations, either as an intermediary on behalf of their clients or importer or exporter for their own goods, are able to apply.

## ■ Pensions

**Jonathan Reynolds:**

[78654]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made on the effect of reforming RPI to align with CPIH on pension schemes deficits.

**John Glen:**

The Retail Prices Index (RPI) is a measure of inflation with a number of shortcomings. To address these shortcomings, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) has made a proposal to reform RPI by bringing the methods and data sources of the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) into RPI. Owing to the use of RPI in specific index-linked gilts, prior to 2030 the Chancellor's consent to this proposal is required before it can be implemented.

At the Budget in March, the government and UKSA launched a consultation to consider whether UKSA's proposal should be implemented at a date other than 2030, and, if so, when between 2025 and 2030. The consultation closed for responses on 21 August. As part of the consultation, the government has invited views on matters including how the holders of the government's issues of index-linked gilts, all of which use RPI as their reference rate, will be affected by the implementation of reform. As noted in this year's Debt Management Report, pension funds are a major holder of index-linked gilts. The consultation also contained a section which invited views on the broader impacts of the proposed reform of RPI.

The government and UKSA will respond to the consultation in the autumn.

**■ Pensions: Devolved Matters****Alan Brown:**[\[83859\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reasons public service pensions in Northern Ireland are devolved but a reserved matter for the Scottish Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

**Steve Barclay:**

The devolved nations and their respective devolution settlements are different. As such, the devolution settlements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland provide different powers to each of the respective Devolved Legislatures and to Devolved Administration Ministers.

The devolution of most aspects of public service pensions policy in Northern Ireland reflects the unique features of that devolution settlement. Public service pensions are a reserved matter for Scotland. In practice, there are some differences across the main Scottish public service pension schemes in respect of consent requirements for secondary legislation, reflecting differences in funding, and there are some smaller fully devolved pension schemes for certain fully devolved public sector bodies.

**■ Ports: Infrastructure****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[78556\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) the Humber Ports and (b) all other ports will have adequate customs infrastructure in place by the end of the transition period.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC are working closely across Government and with ports to understand and implement infrastructure changes in line with the support announced by the Government.

Border controls for EU goods imported into Great Britain will be introduced at the end of the Transition Period in stages (1 January and 1 July 2021). This flexible and pragmatic approach will give industry extra time to make necessary arrangements.

The Government has committed to supporting ports and airports to put in place new or expanded border facilities in Great Britain for carrying out required checks, as well as to providing targeted support to ports to build new infrastructure.

Given the scale of infrastructure required and where there is a lack of space in ports, the Government is aiming to provide inland sites at strategic locations where these checks and other activities will take place.

The Government is already consulting with ports on what infrastructure will be required and to inform decisions on where inland sites should be provided. In preparation, a number of potential sites have been identified at strategic locations across the UK. These have been prioritised where there are shared HMG requirements in specific locations.

**■ Premium Bonds****Christian Wakeford:**[\[77863\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the average time taken for National Savings and Investments to transfer prize money to premium bond winners in each of the last five years.

**John Glen:**

NS&I issues Premium Bond prizes to a regular timetable. The time taken depends on the customer's chosen method of payment and this has not changed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the last 5 years customers have increasingly chosen to receive their prize payments as BACS payments rather than as warrants (by post), resulting in Bond holders receiving their prize payments more quickly.

**■ Public Expenditure: Climate Change****Caroline Lucas:**[\[77557\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the conditions that Departments have been asked to meet as part of preparations for the Comprehensive Spending Review as set out on 21 July 2020 include compatibility with (a) the recommendations set out in the Committee on Climate Change annual progress report published on 24 June 2020 on actions needed to meet currently legislated carbon budgets, (b) the Paris climate agreement, (c) the Government's nature and biodiversity goals and priorities at national and international level and the (d) Sustainable Development Goals; and if he will make a statement.

**Steve Barclay:**

This Government takes its environmental responsibilities very seriously and is committed to meeting its climate change and environmental targets. The UK has legislated to end its contribution to global warming by 2050 under the Climate Change Act 2008, following recommendations from the CCC on setting a Paris-aligned target.

Our priorities for the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) have been published and include leading in the development of technologies that will support the Government's ambition to reach Net Zero emissions by 2050. To help frame the Government's approach at the CSR, an interim report of the Net Zero Review will be published this Autumn, followed by a final report in the Spring.

Departments will be required to fulfil a series of conditions in their CSR returns, including considering climate and other environmental impacts in all proposals.

**■ Public Expenditure: Northern Ireland****Stephen Farry:**[\[82600\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will list each of the Barnett Consequentials that have arisen for the Northern Ireland Executive since 1 April 2020.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Barnett consequentials that have been allocated to the Northern Ireland Executive since 1 April 2020 have been set out in the 2020-21 Main Supply Estimates publication and the latest Block Grant Transparency publication.

On 24 July we made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the Northern Ireland Executive. We guaranteed that they will receive at least £2.2bn in additional Resource DEL funding for this year. This certainty will ensure they can plan a coronavirus response in the months ahead.

**Stephen Farry:**[\[82601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the Barnett Consequentials arising for the Northern Ireland Executive during the 2020-21 financial year must be spent in-year or may be carried forward into the 2021-22 financial year.

**Steve Barclay:**

As set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, the Northern Ireland Executive can carry forward up to 0.6% of Resource DEL underspends and 1.5% of Capital DEL underspends in any year.

**■ Red Diesel: Golf****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[83746\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on community golf clubs of prohibiting the use of red diesel.

**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 recognises that this will be a significant change for some businesses. It 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 on the expected impact of these tax changes.

**■ Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund****Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[84370\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will advise local authorities to apply discretion to the definition of the retail, hospitality and leisure industry to enable them to offer support through the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund to small businesses affected by closures in those industries during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Small businesses occupying properties for retail, hospitality or leisure purposes were likely to be particularly affected by COVID-19 due to their reliance on customer footfall, and the fact that they were less likely than larger businesses to have sufficient cash reserves to meet their high fixed property-related costs. The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund was intended to help small businesses in this situation. The Government provided Local Authorities with detailed information in the Expanded Retail Discount Guidance regarding which kinds of business properties could be classified as retail, hospitality or leisure properties. Local Authorities were responsible for applying this guidance correctly when making grants.

The RHLGF, along with the other business grant schemes, closed to new applicants on 28 August. As many businesses are now able to reopen, and consumer footfall is increasing, it is right that we wind up the grant schemes.

**■ Safety Belts: VAT****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[78635\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to children's car seats.

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[78637\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to children's booster seats.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[78638\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to carrycots with restraint straps.

**Jesse Norman:**

Families already benefit from a reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent on children's carrycots with restraint straps. The Government has no plans to change this VAT treatment at this time.

■ **Sanitary Protection: VAT****Wes Streeting:** [\[78749\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to change the rate of VAT applied to tampons.

**Jesse Norman:**

At Spring Budget on 11 March 2020, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that a zero rate of VAT will apply to women's sanitary products from 1 January 2021, at the end of the transition period.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Directors****Daisy Cooper:** [\[83965\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will include sole directors of limited companies in the Self-employment Income Support Scheme by matching Companies House officer records to dividend payments declared on limited company annual accounts.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said there will be no further changes or extensions to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). However, other forms of support are available for directors of limited companies.

Those who pay themselves a salary may be eligible for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). The CJRS is available to employers, including owner-managers; individuals paying themselves a salary through a PAYE scheme are eligible.

The CJRS and SEISS continue to be just two elements of a comprehensive package of support for individuals and businesses. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants.

■ **Small Businesses: Beer****Jonathan Edwards:** [\[84209\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support for small to medium sized brewers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

To support brewers and drinkers, in March the Government froze beer duty for the third consecutive Budget.

The Government appreciates that brewers, particularly small or craft brewers, are facing a challenging trading period due to COVID-19. However, they can benefit from the unprecedented package of business support offered by the Government.

In addition, if brewers need more help, they can use HMRC's Time To Pay service to seek deferrals of any of their taxes, including beer duty. HMRC will waive late payment penalties and interest where a brewer cannot pay taxes due to COVID-19.

**■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus****Abena Oppong-Asare:**[\[84369\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support is available to small businesses which do not meet the definition of a business in the retail, hospitality and leisure industry and therefore do not qualify for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund but which were directly affected by closures in those industries during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Small businesses which were not eligible for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund may have been able to receive a grant from the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund. Local Authorities had significant discretion when it came to setting the eligibility criteria for their discretionary grant schemes. In some areas, small businesses outside of the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors may have been able to receive discretionary grants.

Small businesses which did not receive any grants should have been able to benefit from other measures in the Government's unprecedented package of support for business during the COVID-19 crisis, including:

- An option to defer VAT payments by up to twelve months;
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme, which will ensure that small and micro businesses can quickly access loans of up to £50,000 which are 100 per cent guaranteed by the Government;
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, now extended to cover all businesses including those which would be able to access commercial credit;
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to support businesses with their wage bills; and
- The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, to provide support to the self-employed.

## ■ Small Businesses: Government Assistance

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[83692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a small business grant scheme targeted at small businesses which were ineligible for the original covid-19 business support schemes in the event of another covid-19 lockdown being imposed.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

As of 24 August, over 893,000 business properties have received over £10.95 billion of grants from the Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The Government also allocated up to an additional £617 million to Local Authorities for the Discretionary Grant Fund, to enable Local Authorities to support some of the businesses which missed out on the SBGF and RHLGF due to the way in which they interact with the business rates system. These schemes all 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 establish a new grants scheme targeted at small businesses which did not receive grants from the original schemes.

## ■ Social Services: Migrant Workers

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[81641\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial implications for local authorities of excluding social care workers from the fast track visa programme; and whether the Government plans to provide additional funding to local authorities in relation to that matter.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[81642\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities with social care responsibilities will receive funding increases commensurate with any inflationary pressures in the sector.

**Steve Barclay:**

The Government completed an Impact Assessment for the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) Regulations 2020: Introduction of the Health and Care Visa, IA number HO0369.

The Chancellor has written to Secretaries of State to launch the Comprehensive Spending Review. This is a multi-year Spending Review, setting resource budgets for three years (21-22 to 23-24) and capital budgets for four years (21-22 to 24-25) to set direction and firm budgets for the duration of the parliament. Any local government funding decisions, including decisions about social care workforce funding, will be taken as part of this Spending Review.

## ■ Street Trading: Coronavirus

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[82406\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) rent assistance and (b) other forms of financial support is available for market traders and stallholders who have been adversely affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

**Steve Barclay:**

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, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme remain open and have been designed to be accessible to businesses in most sectors and across the UK.

Eligible market stalls with a rateable value could also benefit from flat rate payments of £10,000 under the grant scheme for the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. Moreover, in recognition that some market traders were excluded from this grant fund because of the way they interact with the business rates system, the Government encouraged Local Authorities to include these businesses as a priority group for the Discretionary Grant Fund.

In terms of rent assistance, the Government encourages tenants to continue to pay their rent in full where they are in a position to do so, although we recognise that others may not be in this position. We welcome the fact that many local authorities and other operators have been able to be flexible in their approach and negotiate suitable arrangements including rent concessions for a significant number of market traders in support of the industry, recognising the financial strain the pandemic has placed on their finances.

## ■ Taxation

**Carla Lockhart:**

[\[77850\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional steps he is taking to reduce the tax gap in the next three years.

**Jesse Norman:**

The Government is clear that everyone must pay their fair share of tax. Since 2010, the Government has introduced over 100 new measures to tackle tax avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance, and has secured and protected over £220 billion in tax revenues that would have otherwise gone unpaid. These efforts have helped to reduce the tax gap to a record low of 4.7% for the year 2018-19.

At Spring Budget 2020, the Government announced a further 24 measures to tackle tax non-compliance, forecast to raise £4.7 billion over the next five years. The Government remains committed to reducing the tax gap and will bring forward further measures in the autumn.

**■ Taxation: Fraud****Kirsten Oswald:** [\[78718\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer to Question 48486 on 2 June 2010, how many submissions of the iForm had been received by (a) 30 June 2020, (b) 30 June in each of the last three tax years; and if he will estimate the number of submissions expected during the 2020-21 tax year.

**Jesse Norman:**

The total number of iForm submissions made to the tax fraud hotline on GOV.UK in the first quarter of each tax year (April to June) for the last three tax years, was:

2019/20: 15,951

2018/19: 14,265

2017/18: 12,856

23,272 submissions were made between 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

HM Revenue and Customs do not routinely produce estimates of the volume of expected allegations submitted through this reporting pathway.

**■ Tobacco: Smuggling****Andrew Gwynne:** [\[83691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing fines for shops selling illegal tobacco products.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government recognises that civil penalties could be strengthened and announced at March Budget that it intended to consult on new sanctions for businesses trading in illicit tobacco products. HMRC intend to launch that consultation later this year.

**■ Treasury: Personnel Management****John Stevenson:** [\[84204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in his Department's human resources section in April 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

There were 33 full time equivalent staff employed in HMT Treasury's human resource section in April 2020.

**■ Treasury: Property Development****Steve Reed:** [\[83826\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many meetings Ministers in his Department have had with commercial property companies since 1 March 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

Treasury ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

**Treasury: Staff****Neil O'Brien:****[83940]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many members of staff in his Department have either equality, diversity or inclusion in their job title.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

HM Treasury have three job titles that include equality, diversity or inclusion and currently there are 5 staff matching with one of the three Job Titles below:-

Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Diversity Lead, Projects

Head of Diversity and Inclusion

**Treasury: Written Questions****Kirsten Oswald:****[78719]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to Question 52095 tabled by the hon. Member for East Renfrewshire on 1 June 2020.

**Jesse Norman:**

A response was provided on 4 June, and I wrote to the Honourable Member on 7 September to provide further information. A copy of that letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

**WALES****Hydrogen: Wales****Nick Smith:****[81770]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what steps he is taking to support the Welsh hydrogen economy.

**Simon Hart:**

The Government aims to consult on a preferred business model for low-carbon hydrogen production in 2021. This will be key to stimulating the deployment of hydrogen across the UK.

In addition, I am pleased to see that the South Wales Industrial Cluster is being supported by UK Research and Innovation's £170m Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge, which is looking at options for decarbonising the region's industrial base, including using hydrogen.

My officials regularly engage with officials in other departments across the UK Government to raise awareness of the opportunities in Wales for hydrogen energy generation.

■ **Wales Office: Airbus**

**Nia Griffith:** [\[84176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, on how many occasions he has met with representatives of Airbus since 1 July 2020.

**Simon Hart:**

There have been nine meetings between ministers or officials in the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales and Airbus since 1 July 2020. We have been in touch with Airbus regularly throughout the covid-19 pandemic and will continue to do so.

■ **Wales Office: Buildings**

**Nia Griffith:** [\[84175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, when his Department's Cardiff hub will be officially opened.

**David T C Davies:**

The new United Kingdom Government Hub in Cardiff is scheduled to open in February 2021.

■ **Wales Office: Staff**

**Neil O'Brien:** [\[83942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how many members of staff in his Department have equality, diversity or inclusion in their job title.

**David T C Davies:**

Although no staff at the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (OSSW) have diversity or inclusion (D&I) in their job titles, we have a Board Champion responsible for leading on these issues. Also, several staff, including the HR team, contribute to the D&I agenda by participation in relevant groups within the Ministry of Justice (the employer of our staff) and the UK Governance Group at Cabinet Office and by implementing best practice back at OSSW.

**WORK AND PENSIONS****■ Access to Work Programme: Cost Effectiveness****Vicky Foxcroft:****[82170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Disabled People to the Work and Pensions Committee on 29 October 2014, Qq275-6, what estimate she has made of the contribution to the public purse for every £1 spent on the Access to Work programme.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Access to Work is a demand-led, discretionary grant to de-risk the recruitment and retention of disabled people for employers. The grant contributes to the disability related extra costs of working faced by disabled people and those with a health condition that are beyond reasonable adjustment, but it does not replace an employer's duty under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments. Access to Work is a popular and well regarded programme, and in 2018/19 the official Access to Work statistics illustrated the increase in support provided by Access to Work, as the highest ever number of people received payments, 36,240, up 7% on 17/18. Expenditure increased to £129.1 million, equating to a 14% increase in real terms expenditure on 17/18.

A number of studies have explored various aspects of Access to Work but no definitive impact evaluation has taken place. Being in work brings advantages for disabled people, including independence, income, improved confidence, social interaction and mental health and wellbeing, and if the benefits of the Access to Work programme exceed its costs the whole economy will benefit from a financial boost. The 2018 Access to Work Qualitative Research found that the support provided was especially valued and often came at a point of crisis when people might otherwise have fallen out of work. But currently there is no robust cost benefit analysis available, the 2018 'Feasibility of Evaluating the Impact of the Access to Work Programme' Report (please see link below), found that to pursue this analysis would be expensive and require a very large survey sampling exercise which is not feasible at present.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/756442/Feasibility\\_of\\_evaluating\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_the\\_Access\\_to\\_Work\\_programme.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756442/Feasibility_of_evaluating_the_impact_of_the_Access_to_Work_programme.pdf)

**■ Child Maintenance Service: Secondment****Alan Brown:****[82113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July 2020 to Question 76783 on Child Maintenance Service: Secondment, how many Child Maintenance Service staff members remain deployed to the provision of other services.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July 2020 to Question 76783 on Child Maintenance Service: Secondment, how many of the 10,000 staff redeployed for the provision of frontline services are (a) still redeployed, (b) redeployed on a temporary basis and (c) redeployed on a permanent basis.

**Mims Davies:**

Of the total staff redeployed, there were around 1800 Child Maintenance people who were redeployed. This included 141 former CSA colleagues who were due (plans pre Covid19) to be permanently redeployed to other areas of DWP. Of the 1645 were due to return, subsequently 322 were retained on a permanent basis in legacy benefits. Recruitment is currently ongoing to back fill these staff into CMG.

1127 have returned to CMG and there are currently 196 FTE still redeployed however they are due to return later this month.

**Alan Brown:** [\[82115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 28 July 2020 to Question 76783 on Child Maintenance Service: Secondment, how many new employees have been recruited for the provision of frontline services since the start of the covid-19 outbreak to allow Child Maintenance Service staff to return to the roles they were redeployed from.

**Mims Davies:**

Since March 2020 DWP has increased supply by c8500, this comprises permanent and temporary recruitment, contractors/agency workers, and loans from other Government Departments.

## ■ Children: Maintenance

**Drew Hendry:** [\[84290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the level of child maintenance arrears built up by paying parents during the period in which the Child Maintenance Service has not been taking new enforcement action as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

Where payments have been missed we have asked parents to report the changes via the self-service portal. In order to ensure that receiving parents do not lose out in the long run, the Child Maintenance Service is updating cases with notified changes. Where payments have been missed the Service is taking action to re-establish compliance and collect any unpaid amounts that may have accrued.

Those found to be abusing the system are subject to the full extent of our enforcement powers and the Child Maintenance Service will pursue these, where appropriate.

The vast majority of CMS enforcement powers involve third parties, including Her Majesty's courts, enforcement agents and financial institutions. The COVID-19 crisis

meant that these third parties had to pause business. The CMS is now beginning to reinstate a full service and remains committed to working with these key partners to establish how best to restart enforcement activity.

The total amount of Child Maintenance arranged via the Collect and Pay service, and the amount of this that has not been paid, are published quarterly. The latest published figures for Child Maintenance Service are up to the end of March 2020 and can be found in National Table 10 at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-maintenance-service-statistics-data-to-march-2020-experimental>

Statistics containing data to June 2020 will not be available until the next publication, due on 30 September 2020.

### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Training

**Neil O'Brien:**

[\[77791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff in her Department have undertaken unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

**Mims Davies:**

The table below represents the number of DWP employees who have undertaken unconscious bias training within the year periods specified.

| YEAR | NUMBER OF STAFF UNDERTAKING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS LEARNING |
|------|---|
| 2016 | 6835  |
| 2017 | 12359   |
| 2018 | 14121   |
| 2019 | 17354   |
| 2020 | 6051  |

### ■ Disability: Public Sector

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[81512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government has taken to make public services more accessible to people with hidden disabilities.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government is ensuring that disabled people, including people with hidden disabilities have access to public services, such as access to Changing Places toilet facilities, the Blue Badge scheme for parking, and accessible communications. The Government, via the Cabinet Office Disability Unit, is supporting the British Standards

Institute in its development of a public information symbol to support disabled people with non-visible disabilities.

We will publish a National Strategy for Disabled People to ensure that all disabled people can play a full role in society. The Strategy will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects and phases of life, including employment, housing, education and transport.

#### ■ Food Banks

**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[84269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to publish her Department's evidence review on the drivers of food bank usage.

**Will Quince:**

The Department reallocated resources to prioritise work to helping the COVID-19 effort. As such, we will update on the literature review on the factors driving the use of food banks in due course.

#### ■ Immigrants: York

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[82126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people living in (a) York Central constituency and (b) City of York Council area have No Recourse to Public Funds.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

I can confirm that we do not hold this information in DWP. We do not collect information on the number of individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds as a condition of their Immigration status.

#### ■ Industrial Health and Safety: West Midlands

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[77755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many investigations of workplace concerns relating to (a) covid-19 and (b) non-covid-19 concerns, where checks have been made to ensure that measures have been put in place to comply with the law, have been made in (i) Birmingham and (ii) the West Midlands in each month since January 2020; and how many enforcement notices served in respect of those investigations.

**Mims Davies:**

The table below shows the number of Covid-19 and non Covid-19 workplace concerns investigated by operational staff i.e. either Inspectors or Visiting Officers, by region and the number of Notices served.

**2020**

**January February March April May June July TOTAL**

|                      |                                  | 2020 |    |    |     |    |    |    |            |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|------------|
| <b>Birmingham</b>    | COVID concerns investigated*     | 0    | 0  | 0  | 17  | 13 | 6  | 4  | <b>40</b>  |
|                      | Notices issued                   | 0    | 0  | 0  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | <b>0</b>   |
|                      | Non-COVID concerns investigated* | 13   | 12 | 9  | 6   | 8  | 6  | 7  | <b>61</b>  |
|                      | Notices issued                   | 0    | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>West Midlands</b> | COVID concerns investigated*     | 0    | 1  | 0  | 167 | 93 | 55 | 30 | <b>346</b> |
|                      | Notices issued                   | 0    | 0  | 0  | 0   | 2  | 0  | 1  | <b>3</b>   |
|                      | Non-COVID concerns investigated* | 60   | 59 | 50 | 36  | 36 | 40 | 28 | <b>309</b> |
|                      | Notices issued                   | 1    | 6  | 1  | 2   | 2  | 0  | 0  | <b>12</b>  |

\*includes those currently under investigation

NB the data was extracted from HSE's live operational database on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 and the numbers of investigations are based upon the date that the record was created. The Notice numbers are based upon the issue date and may change due to a lag between the date issued and the details being recorded in the operational database.

#### ■ Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[81765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will commission a study from the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council on (a) the prevalence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease among former employees of the health and beauty industry and (b) their potential eligibility for industrial injuries disablement benefit.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) is proposing to commission a comprehensive review and evaluation of the literature, including epidemiology, on

work-related malignant and non-malignant respiratory diseases, primarily focussing on lung cancer and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), to inform, update or potentially expand the industrial injuries scheme. The proposal is in its early stages, the tendering process to appoint a suitably qualified organisation to carry out the research was delayed by the coronavirus crisis and lockdown, but will be resumed as soon as practically possible.

We carefully consider any recommendations made by the IIAC and wider stakeholders. Should IIAC recommend further changes to the list of prescribed diseases, we would of course treat this with careful consideration.

#### ■ Jobcentres: Staff

**Neil Gray:** [\[83827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 74609 on Jobcentres: Staff, what progress she has made on evaluating the job centre network to ensure that the new work coaches are accommodated in a covid-secure way.

**Neil Gray:** [\[83828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2020 to Question 74610, what progress her Department has made on evaluating the estates capacity needed to respond to the economic consequences of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Neil Gray:** [\[83829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2020 to 74611 on Jobcentres: Staff, what progress her Department has made on evaluating estates capacity.

**Neil Gray:** [\[83830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 74612 on Jobcentres: Staff, what progress she has made on evaluating how many new or reopened job centres will be required in (a) Airdrie and Shotts constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the UK to accommodate the new work coaches.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department continues to review both the new and ongoing demand for its services, alongside the requirements for additional office space, to ensure it can cater for the current increase in demand and accommodate new Work Coaches in line with Covid-19 social distancing measures. Parliament will be updated once firm decisions are made on any new premises.

## ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[84265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect on employer operations of the requirement for them to have a minimum of 30 placements on take-up of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

Employers looking to take on less than 30 Kickstarters can apply through an intermediary or representative body such as Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities, trade bodies, Chambers of Commerce and charities. We know that smaller employers may need support through the bidding process and may not have access to the HR and other services to provide the level of support we are looking for employers to provide Kickstart participants.

As intermediaries are approved their details will be made available on Gov.uk and JCPs will be able to guide local employers to local intermediaries.

We've set an initial minimum limit of 30 placements per bid to help us to effectively manage the grant application process as we build confidence in our delivery mechanisms and we will keep this threshold under review.

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[84267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to sign-up employers to the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

We are working with partner organisations in all sectors to ensure that the scheme is of maximum benefit to participants and employers.

We are working closely with local and national partners, to ensure Kickstart jobs are aligned to local labour market need, are additional and support the recovery.

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[84268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons public sector employers are not eligible for inclusion in the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Kickstart Scheme is open to employers from across the private, public and charity sector.

## ■ National Insurance: EU Nationals

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[81914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the National Insurance number application process for EU citizens; and if she will make a statement.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has continued to monitor all aspects of the National Insurance Number (NINo) process throughout recent months, as we continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our services.

When applying for a NINo, all applicants are required to have their identity verified. For those applicants whose identity has already been verified by another UK Government Department, primarily the Home Office, their applications are dealt with by post. For those who have not had their identity verified, primarily EU/EEA nationals, the current process requires them to attend a face to face interview with DWP to verify their identity.

Due to COVID-19, the face to face interview process was suspended from 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This enabled us to retrain and redeploy a large number of staff to help process the substantial number of benefit claims received during this period.

It is not possible, due to the requirement to examine customers' ID documents, to offer a virtual service. However, we are working on a digital solution that should enable us to restart the process incrementally by the end of September 2020.

Employers are required to conduct mandatory Right to Work checks on all prospective employees. Having a NINo is not part of these checks, and the possession of a NINo does not prove that an individual has a right to work. Indeed, an individual can apply for a job and take up employment without a NINo and the HMRC standard process allows payment of salary and collection of tax and NI without a NINo.

**■ Social Security Benefits****Neil Coyle:**[\[84271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what types of change in circumstances are recorded by her Department when a benefit claim is ended as a result of a change in circumstances.

**Will Quince:**

There are a significant number of reasons used to record a claim being closed due to a person's change of circumstances. Some of these are generic across different benefits such as deceased, gone abroad, reached retirement age, in prison, etc. whereas others are specific to the benefit claimed and can include reasons such as the claimant failing to attend an assessment, failing to attend an interview, or closed following an assessment, etc. This list is not exhaustive. The reasons recorded will be dependent on the person's individual circumstances.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Mental Illness

**Jeff Smith:**

[\[82092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on potential difficulties that people with mental health problems have in applying for benefits during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Ministers and officials of both Departments hold regular discussions relating to the ongoing covid-19 outbreak including its impact on people with health conditions.

My Department has provided mental health training for staff who have direct contact with claimants, including all Work Coaches, to equip them to identify mental wellbeing issues or vulnerabilities, and to take appropriate action to support individuals. Work Coaches will tailor support to the needs of the individual and work closely with local organisations that provide additional specialist support.

**Mohammad Yasin:**

[\[82254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the potential additional barriers people with mental health problems experience in applying for benefits during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Ministers and officials of both Departments hold regular discussions relating to the ongoing covid-19 outbreak including its impact on people with health conditions.

My Department has provided mental health training for staff who have direct contact with claimants, including all Work Coaches, to equip them to identify mental wellbeing issues or vulnerabilities, and to take appropriate action to support individuals. Work Coaches will tailor support to the needs of the individual and work closely with local organisations that provide additional specialist support.

### **Background**

Mental wellbeing training has been provided for all staff (around 30,000 colleagues trained to date) who have direct contact with customers (including via telephone).

Staff have also had specific training to help them to identify vulnerable people, and signpost or refer them to further support provided by local partners. Every jobcentre has a complex needs toolkit containing links to local organisations to facilitate this.

Since the start of the pandemic we've introduced online claim application processes [for ESA](#) and [Pension Credit](#) claimants (telephony options still exist). And we've also introduced [new services](#) for deaf claimants.

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[82498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to allow health and disability benefit claimants with mental health illnesses to

choose assessment types that are accessible to their needs during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

In March we suspended all face-to-face assessments for sickness and disability benefits in order to protect people from unnecessary risk of coronavirus at the outset of the pandemic. As has always been the case, our assessment providers will initially try to complete paper-based assessments, where there is sufficient evidence to make a recommendation. If this is not the case, providers will currently look to carry out a telephone assessment, where appropriate. We offer reasonable adjustments for claimants who may need additional support to engage in a telephone assessment. We continue to work closely with our assessment providers to ensure that claimants can be assessed as quickly as possible, by the most appropriate channel.

■ **Statutory Sick Pay**

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[82493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to increase the rate of Statutory Sick Pay to in line with the National Minimum Wage.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides financial support to an employee when they are off work sick. Those on low pay can receive more help through the welfare system, depending on their personal circumstances. The Government published a consultation in which we sought views on the impact of the rate of SSP on employer and employee behaviours and decisions. A response to the consultation will be published later this year.

■ **Support for Mortgage Interest: Coronavirus**

**Carol Monaghan:**

[\[84286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to amend the 36 week eligibility requirement for Support for Mortgage Interest payments to support people struggling with mortgage payments due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Mims Davies:**

The Department has no plans to amend the qualifying period for Support for Mortgage Interest.

Home owners struggling with mortgage repayments because of COVID-19 should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss what support might be available.

■ **Universal Credit**

**Drew Hendry:**

[\[84288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of including a universal credit claim start date selection section, within the universal credit initial claim form, to enable clearer claim backdating for

people who would be eligible under regulation 26 of the Claims and Payments Regulations.

**Drew Hendry:**

**[84289]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) accessibility of the universal credit claim backdating process for eligible applicants and (b) adequacy of the information provided to applicants that they may be eligible to backdate a claim.

**Will Quince:**

We encourage all people to engage with us at their point of need, and as the vast majority of Universal Credit claims are successfully made online, most will not require backdating. However, backdating provision, of up to a maximum of one month, is available where the circumstances are such that someone could not reasonably have been expected to claim earlier, including due to illness, disability or an official computer system failure.

The Department works in partnership with a variety of stakeholders, including local authorities, charities and employer groups, as well as through our local Jobcentres, to distribute factual information on the range of benefits that people could be entitled to.

To support people in making the right decisions we also launched a new microsite within the 'Understanding Universal Credit' website, to help people navigate the range of support available and apply for it. Additionally, we also encourage the use of independent benefits calculators (available via [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)) to ensure individuals can navigate the welfare system and decide what is right for their circumstances.

However, we recognise that some people will still require additional support to successfully submit a claim to Universal Credit. From 1 April 2020 the Department has provided a second year of grant funding to Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to continue to deliver Help to Claim. Help to Claim offers trusted, independent, tailored, practical support to help people make a Universal Credit claim and receive their first full correct payment on time. It is available across England, Wales and Scotland and is usually available online, over the phone and face to face through local Citizens Advice services. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, face to face access was temporarily suspended with the required support being provided through the telephony and web chat channels.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### PRIME MINISTER

#### ■ Machinery of Government

**Prime Minister (Boris Johnson):**

[\[HCWS437\]](#)

I am making this statement to bring to the House's attention the following Machinery of Government change.

PEACE PLUS Programme

I can confirm that Her Majesty's Government's responsibility for the PEACE PLUS Programme will transfer from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the Northern Ireland Office. This change will be effective immediately.