



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 11 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:33 P.M., 11 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Personnel Management

John Stevenson:

[\[84194\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in his Department's human resources section in April 2020.

Michael Ellis:

The following table shows the number of full-time equivalent HR staff at the Attorney General's Office (AGO), the Government Legal Department (GLD) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Serious Fraud Office (SFO) for April 2020:

DEPARTMENT	FTE
AGO*	8
GLD	67.3
HMCPSI*	3.6
CPS	134.45
SFO	10

*These staff also perform other non-HR duties in their roles.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business: Non-domestic Rates

Lucy Powell:

[\[86676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September to Question 84266 on Local Government Finance:

Coronavirus, by what date must local authorities return unspent funds through the coronavirus business support grants funds once final payments have been made on 30 September.

Paul Scully:

Local authorities have now closed their Business Grant Funds and are in the process of making final payments to businesses. These must be complete by 30 September. The reconciliation process will then take place from October.

■ Community Interest Companies

Paul Maynard: [84186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a quarterly searchable record of Community Interest Companies.

Paul Scully:

The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (CICs) publishes a monthly list of newly incorporated CICs. This is freely available and can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-interest-companies-new-cics-registered-in-last-month>.

As CICs are limited companies, all CICS are listed on the public register which is published and maintained by Companies House and is also freely available on the Companies House website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house/about-our-services#find-info>.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Chi Onwurah: [84242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the cost to the public purse has been of the advance purchase of covid-19 vaccines.

Amanda Solloway:

Due to commercial sensitivity, details of the six supply agreements that have and are being negotiated cannot be provided.

Dr Lisa Cameron: [84276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government's bilateral deals with pharmaceutical companies for covid-19 vaccine candidates on (a) the quantity of vaccine candidates that the Covid-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility can procure for low and middle income countries and (b) the availability of covid-19 vaccine candidates for healthcare workers and vulnerable groups globally.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK's bilateral deals with pharmaceutical companies for Covid-19 vaccines include funding for research and development, investment in manufacturing and vaccine trials. This investment supports the global scale up of vaccine production and therefore the quantity of vaccines available for low and middle-income countries as well as for healthcare workers and vulnerable groups globally. The UK is a strong supporter of the multilateral Covid-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility (COVAX) initiative as a means to both get vaccines for the UK population and ensure equitable global access. The UK has contributed £48 million to COVAX already to help ensure vaccines are available in lower income countries.

■ Post Office: ICT

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[86566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, on what date HM Treasury was notified by UKGI that the Post Office was to use public money to contest the case Bates v the Post Office.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[86567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what conditions were attached to the decision of HM Treasury to allow UKGI to use public funds to be used to contest the case Bates v the Post Office.

Paul Scully:

Post Office Ltd. (POL) handled the defence of the Group Litigation. All costs in doing so, including legal costs and the settlement in December 2019, were paid using funds from POL's commercial revenue. BEIS sought and received assurance throughout the process that no public funding was used to contest the litigation.

■ Cabinet Office: Staff

Jon Trickett: [\[77512\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when staff of his Department will be required to return to the office as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office has ensured appropriate measures are in place to establish Covid secure workplaces in which as many staff as possible can work safely.

■ Children

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[86554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many children of (a) primary and (b) secondary school age there are in England.

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 [PQ86554.pdf]

■ Influenza and Pneumonia: Death

Philip Davies: [\[86606\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have died from (a) influenza, (b) pneumonia and (c) a combination of influenza and pneumonia in each of the last 12 months, by (i) region and (ii) 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 [PQ86606.pdf]

DEFENCE**■ Aircraft Carriers**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[84642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has had discussions with its US counterpart on the interoperability of support ships designed for the UK Carrier Strike Group.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has regular discussions with our Allies and Partners on interoperability. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary has a close relationship with their United States counterparts in Military Sealift Command. Discussions on support shipping interoperability, with the US for a UK Carrier Strike Group and future UK support to a US Carrier Group, are an ongoing subject of investigation and dialogue at the operational planning level.

■ Aircraft Carriers: Deployment

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[84644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that budgets for future years will enable Carrier Strike to be capable of routine deployments.

Jeremy Quin:

As mentioned in the NAO report 'Carrier Strike - Preparing for Deployment' operating costs will be refined during the forthcoming inaugural operational deployment. This work will inform budget allocation for future routine deployments.

■ Aircraft Carriers: Fleet Solid Support Ships

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[84641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department's definition of Carrier Enabled Power Projection, to be achieved by 2026, will include at least one new Fleet Solid Support ship being operational.

Jeremy Quin:

The definition of Full Operating Capability of the core Carrier Enabled Power Projection programme does not include provision of a new Fleet Solid Support ship.

However, the Ministry of Defence has been undertaking work to assess the way ahead for the Fleet Solid Support Programme and a Prior Information Notice was published on 22 July 2020 inviting potential suppliers to participate in a period of market engagement prior to the commencement of a new competition. The results of which will be analysed in due course.

■ Aircraft Carriers: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[84639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, at what date his Department estimates that the UK will be capable of operating two aircraft carriers simultaneously with two squadrons of F-35s.

Jeremy Quin:

It has been longstanding policy that by bringing two aircraft carriers into service we will ensure that there will always be at least one carrier available 100 per cent of the time, either at sea or in port at very high readiness to deploy.

The CEPP programme remains on track to deliver the second operational squadron of F-35 by December 2023. This will provide two squadrons available to embark on one or both carriers as directed by operational tasking.

■ Aircraft Carriers: Spare Parts

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[84643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what progress has been made on the Support Improvement Programme, to improve the maintenance and provision of spare parts for the UK's two aircraft carriers.

Jeremy Quin:

The Support Improvement Programme is making good progress.

100 per cent of the necessary spares were available from the first day of both ships' 2020 Fleet Time Support Periods.

■ Defence Equipment: Balance of Trade**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will publish data on the UK's balance of trade with defence equipment with (a) the Americas, (b) Europe, (c) the Near/Middle East, (d) Africa and (e) Asia.

Jeremy Quin:

On a rolling 10-year basis, the UK remains the second largest global defence exporter and in 2018, the UK won defence orders worth £14 billion. The Department of International Trade, Defence & Security Exports publishes annually on GOV.UK, those defence and security export statistics that relate to sales to overseas ministries of defence and associated armed services.

Over the same 10-year period, open source data published by the Department for International Trade on GOV.UK indicates that the UK was the 12th biggest defence importer but the Government does not collect official data on the import of defence equipment by global region.

■ Defence: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has accelerated any defence programmes over financial year 2020-21, in order to ensure the resilience of defence companies and supply chains.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) ensured that throughout the pandemic orders have continued to be placed and suppliers paid as normal. In line with Government guidance, the MOD has to date paid £99.1 million in interim payments to ensure that critical defence outputs can continue uninterrupted. The MOD has engaged directly with more than 600 of its critical suppliers to enhance our understanding of supply chain resilience.

In addition, as part of the Treasury fiscal stimulus programme to drive further economic activity in the building sector, the MOD announced in July 2020 that almost £200 million of funding would be allocated to improve Service Family Accommodation and Single Living Accommodation across the defence estate. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation is accelerating delivery of this programme for completion in 2020/21.

We will continue to actively monitor the defence sector to understand the longer-term impact of Covid-19 on industry.

Robin Millar:[\[84740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what requirement there is for companies funded by his Department to pay financial penalties if they under-estimate the cost of projects awarded to them and fail a National Audit Office inspection.

Jeremy Quin:

The National Audit Office (NAO) audits the Ministry of Defence (MOD) financial accounts and conducts investigations on MOD programmes and activities. It does not inspect or audit defence industry companies and, as such, companies do not fail NAO audit inspections.

The MOD regularly scrutinises the performance of its suppliers, holding them to account for performance against the terms and conditions of their contracts. This includes monitoring costs and progress against delivery milestones and taking action as appropriate in the event of an over or underrun. As a general principle, the MOD would seek to resolve issues of under or overestimation of cost through the terms and conditions of the contract, rather than through financial penalties.

HMS Severn**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department undertook prior to recommissioning HMS Severn.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[84647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the Government decided to recommission HMS Severn.

James Heapey:

It was announced in November 2018 that HMS SEVERN would be retained by the Royal Navy (RN) along with two other Batch 1 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV), HMS TYNE and HMS MERSEY. The vessels perform a range of duties within home waters in support of homeland security, fishing protection and training. These versatile vessels provide the RN with excellent capabilities in UK territorial waters allowing larger warships to be deployed more regularly abroad.

Military Aid**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the flying hours' cost of the Atlas aircraft operating in the English Channel has been for the last two months.

James Heapey:

The A400M has flown a single mission over the Channel in support of the Border Force on 10 August. The individual cost of this sortie has not been captured as a pre-programmed training sortie was utilised to complete this task, the costs of which are covered within Air Command's Annual Budget total and there were therefore no additional costs to Defence.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[84971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the flying hours' cost was of the P-8 aircraft operating in the English Channel in the last two months.

James Heappey:

All of the missions conducted by the P-8A Poseidon in support of the Border Force over the English Channel have been conducted as routine training missions that were already programmed to take place. The costs of these sorties are covered within Air Command's Annual Budget total and there were therefore no additional costs to Defence. Consequently, the costs of these sorties have not been separately captured.

■ **Military Decorations****Stephen Morgan:**[\[86745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment has he made of the potential merits of introducing a National Defence Medal.

James Heappey:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Broadlands and Norfolk (Jerome Mayhew) on 24 March 2020, to Question 30067.

Attachments:

1. National Defence Medal. [Hansard Extract UIN 30067 24 March 2020.docx]

■ **Ministry of Defence: Declassified UK****Martyn Day:**[\[86712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the letter of 4 September 2020 addressed to him from the International Press Institute, for what reason his Department's press office has decided to refuse comment to the news outlet Declassified UK.

Martyn Day:[\[86713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the decision by the Council of Europe to issue a Level 2 media freedom alert after his Department refused comment to the media organisation Declassified UK, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his Department's communications policy with the Government Communication Service Propriety Guidance to deal with all news media even-handedly.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department is looking into the specifics raised in the hon. Member's questions and we will write to him shortly.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Disclosure of Information****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to undertake an investigation into the number of leaks from his Department over the 2020 summer recess.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Ministry of Defence does not tolerate leaks and anyone found to have made unauthorised disclosures will face disciplinary or legal action. Leaks are investigated by the relevant departments when they occur.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[84976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many days each Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel spent at sea in the each of the last 10 years.

James Heapey:

It has not been possible to collate the information in the time given. I will write to the hon. Member when it is available.

Type 26 Frigates: Procurement**Luke Pollard:**[\[84738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Minister signed off the media comment in the article published in Plymouth Live of 27 August 2020 describing reports of the possible reduction of the total order of Type 26 frigates as fake news.

Jeremy Quin:

The official Ministry of Defence response to the reports was:

"With every review it is always the case that people draw early and false conclusions from leaks. We advise against making assumptions based on partial information.

"The guiding principle of the Integrated Review is to ask ourselves what the threat is, and whether we have the capability to meet it."

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Arts: Coronavirus****Alec Shelbrooke:**[\[83765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will ensure that the distribution of the covid-19 arts rescue package includes funding for (a) the Royal Northern Sinfonia and (b) other institutions in the North of England.

Caroline Dinenge:

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. The relevant DCMS Arms Length Bodies (Arts Council England, Historic England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and the British Film Institute) will make funding decisions for grants against the published criteria agreed by Ministers. In addition, the independent Culture Recovery Board will make decisions regarding applications for loans, and provide additional assurance over the largest grants.

■ Broadcasting: Disinformation

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[84725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to tackle inaccurate and misleading claims on health matters appearing on broadcast media.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Broadcasting regulation is a matter for Ofcom, as the UK's independent regulator of television and radio. Ofcom sets and enforces stringent standards for licensed broadcasters to meet in its Broadcasting Code. Broadcasters must provide adequate protection to UK audiences from harmful content, including any potential harm that might arise from misleading or inaccurate health advice.

In July 2020, Ofcom advised broadcasters to be alert to the potential for significant harm to audiences related to the coronavirus, including the accuracy or material misleadingness in programmes in relation to the coronavirus or public policy regarding it.

With regard to broadcast advertising, the Advertising Standards Authority enforces the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (BCAP Code), through a system of co-regulation with Ofcom. The BCAP Code incorporates all relevant legislation, and sets standards for accuracy and honesty to which advertisers must adhere, including specific conditions intended to ensure that health claims in advertising receive the necessary high level of scrutiny and can be substantiated.

■ Charity Commission

Rachael Maskell:

[\[84301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he last conducted a review of the effectiveness of the Charity Commission.

Mr John Whittingdale:

DCMS has regular discussions with the Charity Commission around the regulatory framework for charities in England and Wales.

The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 gave the Charity Commission extra regulatory powers including strengthening the protection of charities against abuse. DCMS carried out a Post-Implementation Review of the Act which was published on 16th March 2020. Based on the evidence within the Post-Implementation Review, DCMS concluded that the Charity Commission had used these new powers effectively. The National Audit Office published a progress update

on the Commission in November 2017, recognising that it "has improved significantly" since its 2013 report.

Increased use of the Commission's powers also shows progress: In 2019/20 the Commission concluded 6,246 regulatory action cases, of which 181 were statutory inquiries, and opened 67 new inquiries. It used its regulatory powers almost 2,000 times. This is compared with 15 statutory inquiries and 200 uses of legal powers in 2012-13.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Tracy Brabin: [\[84723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date he plans to announce the names of organisations receiving support from the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Caroline Dinenage:

Our priority is to ensure that organisations get the funding they need as swiftly as possible. Our Arms Length Bodies made emergency funding available in the spring and this package builds on that. We expect funding to start flowing to organisations in September with further details to be announced after that.

Tracy Brabin: [\[86126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish further information on the allocation of the remaining £258 million in funding from the Cultural Renewal Fund.

Caroline Dinenage:

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. In the first round of funding, £622 million will be distributed, the remaining £258 million has been reserved for funding later in the financial year. The distribution of this £258 million will be dependent on the outcome of the first round of funding so that it can best meet the developing needs of organisations.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Personnel Management

John Stevenson: [\[84197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in his Department's human resources section in April 2020.

Mr John Whittingdale:

On 30th April 2020 there were 55.6 FTE payroll Civil Servants in the People and Workplace directorate in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

This FTE total includes all Civil Servants reporting to the department's People and Workplace Director, and includes the following teams:

- People and Workplace Delivery
- People Strategy and Development
- Estates and Security

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Resignations

Chi Onwurah:

[\[83790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many officials have left his Department to work for (a) Google, (b) Amazon and (c) Facebook since 1 April 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Our records show that since 1 April 2019 the number of officials who have left the Department to work for these organisations is as follows:

- (a) Google: 0
- (b) Amazon: 1
- (c) Facebook: 2

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon:

[\[86641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a tailored funding support package for the events sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS appreciates the important role that the events sector plays in the UK's economy, and that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to many businesses operating in this sector.

The Secretary of State announced an unprecedented £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 cultural and creative sectors which will benefit events professionals by helping music venues and many other organisations in the Creative Industries that host live events, to stay open and continue operating.

As part of this support package, the Emergency Grassroot Music Venues Fund is being shared among 135 venues across England who applied for support to survive the imminent risk of collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In response to the demand for help from some of the hardest hit in the sector, and to ensure the support would be felt far and wide, an additional £1.1 million was also brought forward, increasing the fund from £2.25 million to £3.36 million to help as many venues as quickly as possible.

From 15th August and as part of the Government's 5 stage roadmap to get performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as

possible, venues and organisations have been able to put on live indoor performances in front of a socially-distanced audience. This is in addition to the earlier announcement that from 11 July we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distanced audiences.

We are committed to continuing to work with the events sector to understand the difficulties they face and help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery.

■ Ice Skating: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon:

[\[81812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reopening ice skating rinks for training purposes as covid-19 lockdowns are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health.

Ice-skating rinks were able to reopen from 15 August. These facilities are able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance. Elite athletes have been able to access specialist sports facilities for training purposes since mid-April.

■ Performing Arts: Intellectual Property

Patrick Grady:

[\[82057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish a response to Early Day Motion 718 on Audio-visual performers' rights.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Actors and other audiovisual performers enrich our lives and our culture and make an important contribution to our economy. The United Kingdom's high standards of intellectual property protection include protections for audiovisual performers which reflect this contribution and allow them to be rewarded for it. These include economic rights in audiovisual performances which are consistent with those set out in the Beijing Treaty.

The United Kingdom is a signatory to the Beijing Treaty. However, while it was a Member State of the European Union, it was unable to proceed towards ratification by itself. Now that the UK has left the European Union, we are able to consider ratification as part of our future domestic and international policy agendas.

However, the Treaty contains certain optional provisions, which may be implemented in different ways. Before taking steps to ratify the treaty, these and other elements would need to be fully considered and their impacts assessed. This would include

consultations with interested parties to best ensure that the most appropriate decisions are made for the United Kingdom's creative industries and audiovisual performers in particular.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[84224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to help the return of fans at live sports events during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is keen to see the safe return of spectators to live sports events. A programme of pilot events is being carried out to allow venues and operators to test their covid-secure arrangements in line with the Government's guidance on the return of fans to elite sports events. The latest list of events was announced on 26 August 2020 and includes football, horse racing and rugby union.

The events have been selected to test a range of different event styles across the country's major men's and women's spectator sports. A number of successful pilots have already been completed, including snooker at the Crucible, cricket at Edgbaston and the Oval, and football at Brighton & Hove Albion.

Subject to public health conditions, the pilots will build up throughout September with a view to a full reopening for fans under covid-secure conditions from 1 October.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[84304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the financial challenges faced by the voluntary and community sector as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr John Whittingdale:

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

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.

Ensuring charities can begin fundraising activities will be a crucial part of the sector's recovery. On the 24th June, DCMS published a collection of guidance for DCMS sectors relating to COVID-19. This includes practical guidance and resources from the Fundraising Regulator and Chartered Institute of Fundraising supporting charities to safeguard the public, staff and volunteers as they plan to return to fundraising activities in a safe and responsible way. This can be viewed at;

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

■ Voluntary Organisations: Redundancy

Rachael Maskell:

[84297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that all redundancies made in the community and voluntary sector are being recorded.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Any employer, including an employer within the community and voluntary sector, that is proposing to make 20 or more redundancies must notify the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Failure to do so is an offence. As charities are independent organisations, it is for them and their trustees to ensure that any proposed redundancies at this scale are reported in a timely manner.

DCMS has had and continues to have regular engagement with the community and voluntary sector. However, DCMS does not record redundancy data.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments: Appeals

Seema Malhotra:

[85052]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on appeals by students of their centre assessed grades; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Ofqual has published summary guidance, agreed with school and college leaders, which makes clear what the process was for putting together centre assessment grades and the grounds of appeal which are available. The guidance can be viewed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887018/Summer_2020_Awarding_GCSEs_A_levels_-_Info_for_Heads_of_Centre_22MAY2020.pdf.

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

■ Children: Internet**Chi Onwurah:****[86651]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of households with school-age children that do not have access to the internet.

Nick Gibb:

In the last academic year, the Department invested over £100 million to support remote education and delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets and over 50,000 4G wireless routers to local authorities and academy trusts for children who would not otherwise have access.

The Department allocated devices to local authorities and academy trusts based on its estimates of the number of eligible children that did not have access to a device or connectivity through other means, such as a privately or through school. Local authorities and academy trusts were responsible for distributing the devices, being best placed to know which children and young people need access to a device delivered through the programme.

Where local authorities and academy trusts identified a need greater than their initial allocation, they could provide evidence and request more laptops, tablets and routers. No valid request for additional devices for eligible children was denied.

The Department has published data that shows the number of devices and routers received by each local authority and academy trust that participated in the scheme. This information is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912888/Devices_and_4G_wireless_routers_progress_data_as_of_27_August_2020.pdf.

The Department is now supplementing this support by making an initial 150,000 additional devices available in the event that face-to-face schooling is disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions.

■ Department for Education: Personnel Management**John Stevenson:****[84198]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in his Department's human resources section in April 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The number of full-time equivalent staff employed within HR as of April 2020 was 117.7.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Bob Stewart:

[\[83730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued to schools in the event that a single child in a year group tests positive for covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The actions that schools should take in the event that a child tests positive for COVID-19 are outlined within the GOV.UK guidance for full opening and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-1-public-health-advice-to-minimise-coronavirus-covid-19-risks>.

This guidance states that schools must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for COVID-19, and contact their local health protection team. This team will also contact schools directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 attended the school.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious. They will work with schools in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact.

Alex Norris:

[\[85110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support will be offered to pupils in year 13 during the 2020-21 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

Children and young people across the country have experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of COVID-19. Those from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds will be amongst those hardest hit. We know that we have the professional knowledge and expertise in the education system to ensure that children and young people recover and get back on track.

Additional funding of up to £96 million to support 16-19 year olds for the 2020-21 academic year is available through the National Tutoring Programme, enabling schools and colleges to provide small group tuition for disadvantaged students whose education has been disrupted as a result of COVID-19.

■ Supply Teachers: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[84724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has published for (a) schools and (b) agencies on supply teachers claiming statutory sick pay if self-isolating during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

As both my right hon. Friends, the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have made clear, the Government will do whatever it takes to support people affected by COVID 19.

The Government has provided guidance on Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for all employers, which includes specific information on when an employee is off work because of COVID-19. This guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/employers-sick-pay>.

Employers must pay an employee SSP if they are self-isolating and off work for at least 4 days and any of the following apply:

- They, or someone they live with, has coronavirus symptoms:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

- They've been notified by the NHS, or public health authorities, that they've been in contact with someone with coronavirus:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

- Someone in their 'support bubble' (or 'extended household' if they live in Scotland or Wales) has symptoms:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july><https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-2-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/meeting-others/><https://gov.wales/guidance-extended-households-coronavirus>.

Mary Kelly Foy:**[86755]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the use of supply teachers in schools.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally.

The Department collects information on teacher numbers from the School Workforce Census but does not hold live information on the use of supply teachers. The Census data can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce>.

As schools begin to reopen for all pupils from the beginning of the autumn term, we anticipate the demand for supply teachers to return to normal and supply teachers will continue to make a vital contribution in our schools.

Teachers: Coronavirus**Gill Furniss:****[86735]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the provision of fast-tracked testing for

teachers with (a) symptoms of covid-19 and (b) who have come into contact with someone with covid-19 symptoms.

Nick Gibb:

All members of school staff and pupils should get a test if they have symptoms of COVID-19. The capacity of the NHS Test and Trace system must be protected for those with symptoms of the virus, and so it is vital that only those with symptoms get tested.

Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate in line with guidance, but should not get tested unless they themselves develop symptoms.

■ **Teachers: Training**

Chi Onwurah:

[86654]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what training has been provided to teachers to help them adapt to remote teaching.

Nick Gibb:

We expect schools to have a strong contingency plan for remote education in place in case of any localised disruption to face-to-face education. We have asked schools to look to align the quality of their existing provision against the expectations set out in the published guidance on curriculum and remote education provision. This guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-3-curriculum-behaviour-and-pastoral-support>.

The Department has provided a range of resources to support schools in delivering remote education. This includes examples of teaching practice during COVID-19, which provides an opportunity for schools to learn from each other's approaches to remote education, as well as our work with sector-led initiatives such as Oak National Academy.

Examples of teaching practise during COVID-19 are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy, both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20 and for the 2020-21 academic year, to provide video lessons for Reception up to Year 11. This will include specialist content for pupils with SEND. Oak will remain a free optional resource for 2020-21.

The Government is also funding expert technical support to help schools set up secure user accounts for Google and Microsoft's education platforms. Schools can apply for government-funded support through The Key for School Leaders to get set up on one of two free-to-use digital education platforms: G Suite for Education or Office 365 Education. The Key provides feature comparisons on the two platforms to enable schools to make an informed choice, as well as case studies on how schools

are making the most of these platforms. Information is available here:

<https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/>

The Department's EdTech Demonstrator programme has also been helping schools and colleges access training and advice on remote teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak. Further information about the programme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edtech-demonstrator-schools-and-colleges-successful-applicants/about-the-programme>.

While schools and colleges were closed to most pupils, the support package provided by the Demonstrators included direct one-to-one advice and training, along with an offer of online tutorials, webinars and recorded content.

The Demonstrator programme will continue to offer Continuing Professional Development to all state-funded schools and colleges in England until March 2021, and the Demonstrators will continue to bridge the gap between technology available to schools and colleges and successfully using that technology to deliver education. Support can be tailored to meet individual needs, while considering start point, confidence in technology practices and the time available to senior leaders. Transitioning back to the classroom, blended teaching approaches, creating a remote education contingency plan and implementing a digital strategy are just a few examples of how the Demonstrators can support schools and colleges.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Fisheries: Marine Protected Areas

Chris Grayling:

[\[84157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will limit the size of trawlers allowed to operate in marine protected areas.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[84306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect Marine Protection Areas from supertrawlers operating in those zones.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine protection is a devolved matter and the information provided relates to England only.

The impact a fishing vessel has on a Marine Protected Area is determined by how damaging the fishing method is, rather than the size of the vessel. 'Supertrawlers' generally target pelagic species of fish within the water column and are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats, such as reef and sediment habitats, for which most Marine Protected Areas are designated.

A new power proposed in the Fisheries Bill will allow the Marine Management Organisation to protect offshore Marine Protected Areas from damaging fishing

activity. We are prioritising those Marine Protected Areas most at risk and aim to make rapid progress as soon as the transition period ends.

Our Fisheries Bill prohibits any commercial fishing vessel 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.

■ **Foxes: Urban Areas**

Catherine West:

[\[86729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department is planning to take steps to manage the number of urban foxes in London and other urban areas.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's general policy is that individuals should be free to manage wildlife within the law. The fox is not a protected species so the decision to control them lies with the owner or occupier of the property where the problem occurs. Where urban foxes cause problems professional pest controllers with relevant specialist skills are likely to be the most suited people for the task of removing foxes.

Natural England, on Defra's behalf, has a team dedicated to providing wildlife management advice to the public, both through online material and directly by telephone.

The Government has no plans to control the number of urban foxes in England.

■ **Organic Food: EU Law**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[86629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions the Government has had with the EU on the preservation of Soil Association certification for organic products after the transition period; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government proposed an organics equivalence agreement in its Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) proposals. Organics is currently included in the UK's proposed CFTA legal text as a technical annex and the negotiations are ongoing.

In addition, the six UK control bodies, including Soil Association Certification, have applied to the EU for recognition as equivalent for the purpose of trade. We understand that these applications by the individual organic control bodies are progressing.

■ Vacant Land**Chris Grayling:** [\[84155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the total area of undeveloped land in the UK available for agricultural, forestry, moorland or other countryside use.

Rebecca Pow:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only. The total area in England of non-developed land (agricultural, forest and open land only), which may be available for conversion to agricultural, forestry, moorland or other countryside uses, is 10,910,678 hectares (based on 2018 MHCLG Land Use data, the latest available). A proportion of this land will already comprise species rich or protected habitats or high grades of agricultural land so may not be suitable for conversion to other uses.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ China and USA: Nuclear Weapons****Jim Shannon:** [\[84257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on preventing a nuclear arms race from taking place between the US and China.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary has regular discussions with his US counterpart on a range of issues, including strategic security.

US strategic arms, along with those of Russia, are limited by the New START Treaty. We recognise the contribution New START has made to international security by increasing transparency and mutual confidence among the two largest Nuclear Weapons States. We support its continued implementation and have encouraged the US to extend New START while negotiating a successor agreement.

However, New START does not include new Russian systems, nor does it place any limits on China's growing nuclear arsenal. We therefore urge China to engage seriously with the US calls for a new trilateral arms control agreement.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[84324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 77758, when he plans to begin engagement with (a) Parliament, (b) devolved Administrations, (c) civil society, and (d) UK allies and partners on the Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review; and what form that engagement will take.

James Cleverly:

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs has engaged with Parliament from the start of the Integrated Review process, including through updating the Foreign Affairs Committee during a session in March. He has submitted written evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee as part of the inquiry into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Integrated Review. Over the course of the Integrated Review, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be engaging with international allies and partners, including through its diplomatic network, with Devolved Administrations, Civil Society and a wide range of external experts.

This is part of wider HMG engagement with Parliament, Devolved Administrations, Civil Society as well as the UK's allies and partners regarding the Integrated Review.

The Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence has informally briefed peers with an interest in the Integrated Review. The Deputy National Security Adviser with responsibility for the Integrated Review has informally briefed the Defence Committee and offered similar briefings to other relevant committees. Cabinet Office officials have held virtual discussions with the Devolved Administrations since the re-start of the Integrated Review. The Government will continue to engage in discussions with the Devolved Administrations over the course of the review.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Gender**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[86006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy includes advancing gender equality as a key priority for his Department.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: The UK remains fully committed to advancing gender equality and women's rights. The UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act makes consideration of gender equality in all UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) a legal requirement.

The Integrated Review and the creation of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) are evidence of the Prime Minister's commitment to a unified British foreign policy that will maximise our influence around the world, including on gender equality and women's rights. When the Prime Minister launched the Integrated Review, he was clear that it will set out the way in which the UK will be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation. Our aim continues to be for an ambitious and bold Integrated Review that is guided by the UK's foreign policy, national security and development objectives. Advancing gender equality and women's rights are a core part of the UK Government's mission, and our role as a force for good in the world, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda.

■ Kenya: Counter-terrorism**Stephen Timms:** [\[85928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Secret Intelligence Service requires ministerial approval to share intelligence on the location of terror suspects with Kenyan intelligence agencies; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments not to comment on the detail of intelligence operations.

■ Libya: Land Mines**Jim Shannon:** [\[84256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Libyan counterpart on the use of landmines in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK is deeply concerned at increasing numbers of reported casualties this year, resulting from landmines, booby traps, improvised explosive devices and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The UK Government continues to raise this issue at senior levels, including in its intervention on Libya at the UN Security Council on 2 September, and in contacts with Libyan interlocutors. Through the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund, we fund the survey and clearance of areas contaminated by ERW. This includes training in explosive ordnance disposal and other technical mine action activities, and mine risk education, to raise awareness of the dangers of mines and ERW.

■ Palestinians: Overseas Aid**Anna McMorrin:** [\[82291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, (a) what was the total budget this year for DFID's Palestinian aid programme; and (b) 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]: Following an internal review and prioritisation exercise of all Overseas Development Aid spending, we have not planned cuts to proposed total spend in the OPTs for financial year 2020/2021. This is £71.4m as per the DFID annual report published in July 2020.

■ Riot Control Weapons: USA

Emily Thornberry:

[\[84172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which unit in his Department was responsible for conducting the June 2020 reassessment of exports of riot control equipment to the US; how long that reassessment took to conduct; and what process was put in place to gather and analyse the evidence relevant to that reassessment.

James Cleverly:

On 4 June, in line with standard practice, officials in the Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU) agreed that a reassessment should be undertaken in order to assess whether relevant licences remained consistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. ECJU-FCDO completed its reassessment on 12 July.

Information on the situation in the USA was collated by ECJU from independent press coverage, social media reports, reports from Non-Governmental Organisations and from diplomatic missions across the USA. This information was analysed to determine whether events gave rise to a clear risk under the Consolidated Criteria that crowd control equipment exported to the USA might be used for internal repression.

■ Yemen: Overseas Aid

Anna McMorrin:

[\[82294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total budget was this year for DFID's Yemen 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]: The UK committed £160 million in new aid for Yemen for the current financial year (2020/21) at the 2020 Yemen Humanitarian Pledging Conference on 2 June.

We have every intention of meeting our commitment and have already disbursed 60 per cent of our £160 million funding for this year. We will continue to disburse funding quickly to ensure our partners have the resources to continue delivering assistance.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion

Scott Benton:

[\[82514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment was made of the rate of complications resulting from abortion performed at (a) hospital and (b) home prior to the introduction of the temporary provision which permits both sets of abortion pills to be used at home.

Scott Benton:

[\[82515\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on abortion coercion for (a) surgical abortions and (b) out-of-clinic medical abortions.

Helen Whately:

No comparative assessment has been made on the rate of complications to date.

The Department does not hold data on coercive abortion. Safeguarding is an essential component of abortion services. Individual providers must ensure that all staff are trained in recognising the signs of potential abuse in adult women and know how to respond.

■ **Abortion: Coronavirus**

Sir Edward Davey:

[\[83658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what safeguarding provisions his Department has put in place for women who have been prescribed abortions at home during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

Safeguarding is an essential component of abortion services. All providers must comply with legal requirements and have regard to any statutory guidance relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Providers must ensure that all staff are trained in recognising the signs of potential abuse and know how to respond. Providers must have written guidance that staff are aware of and can easily refer to as well as easy access to a named lead in the organisation for guidance and advice. It is also a requirement that clinicians caring for women requesting abortion should be able to identify those who require more support than can be provided in the routine abortion service setting, for example young women, those with a pre-existing mental health condition, those who are subject to sexual violence or poor social support, or where there is evidence of coercion.

■ **Abortion: Drugs**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[81519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have been admitted to hospital for complications after being prescribed medical abortion pills, since 1 April 2020.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold this data.

We are aware of a small number of incidents of concern which we are looking into alongside with the Care Quality Commission and other partners. We continue to closely monitor the impact of the temporary approval for women's homes to be classed as a place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken up to 10 weeks gestation.

■ Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund

Daniel Zeichner:

[81969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is requiring local authorities to report how they have spent their discretionary 25 per cent allocation of the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund; and how much funding has been allocated to social care providers the local authority (a) has and (b) does not have a contract with.

Helen Whately:

As part of the grant conditions of the £600 million Infection Control Fund, local authorities are required to submit two high-level returns specifying how the grant has been spent. Funding must be used for infection control measures. A breakdown of spending of the first instalment, by local authority, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-infection-control-fund>

Subject to the conditions in the grant determination being satisfied, local authorities should pass 75% of each instalment straight to care homes within the local authority's geographical area on a 'per beds' basis, including to social care providers with whom the local authority does not have existing contracts. The Department does not collect data on providers that local authorities have existing contracts with.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[78777]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of confidence that care homes employing agency staff on an emergency basis can have that those staff will have had a covid-19 test in the last seven days.

Helen Whately:

All agency staff working in care homes are eligible to access weekly COVID-19 testing through the care home they work in. Regular retesting was initially rolled out for care homes specialising in care for over 65s and/or those with dementia. All other adult care homes are now eligible to place orders for test kits to begin regular retesting.

The testing process does not differentiate between agency staff and permanent care home staff.

Daniel Kawczynski:

[81733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that care home (a) residents and (b) staff members can be tested regularly for covid-19.

Helen Whately:

Following an initial round of whole home testing, on 3 July we began rolling out regular retesting to care homes. We initially rolled out retesting for over 65s and those caring for people with dementia. All other adult care homes are now eligible to

register for test kits using the online portal and distribution to these homes began on 7 September.

Care home staff are offered weekly testing, while residents receive a test every 28 days.

Helen Hayes: [82198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to increase the range of (a) extra care housing and (b) housing with care to alleviate pressure on the care home sector.

Helen Whately:

Housing-with-care (or extra care housing) has a vital role in enabling older people to live independently, with the necessary care and support available if required. The Department of Health and Social Care together with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government provides capital funding to incentivise the supply of supported housing for older people, including housing-with-care. In the context of an ageing population, we will continue to work with the sector to improve the diversity of housing options available to older people.

■ Children: Day Care

Zarah Sultana: [82496]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reimburse childcare costs to parents working in the health and social care system who had to isolate from their children during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

National Health Service and social care staff should follow existing guidance on social distancing. Employers will have local policies related to childcare and are encouraged to exercise the maximum amount of flexibility and discretion in these situations, recognising the difficult circumstances of the pandemic.

Where staff live in the same household as someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, employers should consider all options, including supporting staff to work from home, temporary redeployment, flexible working hours or special leave arrangements.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have supported employers, ensuring they are provided with up to date information on childcare support and guidance to support the financial wellbeing of staff. NHS Employers have also published guidance on supporting staff with childcare responsibilities through COVID-19 which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/supporting-staff-with-childcare-responsibilities>

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Social Services

Munira Wilson:

[82469]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the number of Departmental staff working on social care in the next six months.

Helen Whately:

In June 2020 the Department established a dedicated Social Care Group (SCG) to protect care recipients, carers/care workers and the care system itself from the impact of COVID-19 and ensure that everyone in receipt of care gets the care and support they need. The new SCG group has increased staff working on this area and, we will continue to keep staffing numbers under review.

■ Drugs and Medical Equipment

Layla Moran:

[84733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that buffer stocks of (a) prescription medicines and (b) medical products and devices from the UK's EU exit stockpile are being replenished before December 2020; and how many weeks' worth of each such products will be stockpiled.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: The Department, in consultation with the devolved administrations and Crown Dependencies, are working with trade bodies, suppliers, and the health and care system to make detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products to the whole of the United Kingdom at the end of the transition period.

As set out in a letter from the Department to industry of 3 August, we are implementing a multi-layered approach, that involves asking suppliers to get trader ready, reroute their supply chains away from any potential disruption and stockpiling to a target level of six weeks on UK soil where this is possible. The letter is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-medicines-and-medical-products-suppliers-3-august-2020/letter-to-medicine-suppliers-3-august-2020>

■ Endometriosis: Children and Young People

Gill Furniss:

[83895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the findings of the report The prevalence of endometriosis in adolescents with pelvic pain: a systematic review, published in July 2020 in the Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology, that one in ten girls may have endometriosis; and whether he plans to introduce a target to reduce the average waiting time for a diagnosis of endometriosis.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: The Government is aware of and sympathises with the hardships faced by women who experience severe symptoms from conditions such as endometriosis.

There is currently no plan to introduce a target to reduce the average waiting time for a diagnosis. NHS England advises that women with symptoms suggestive of endometriosis may undergo diagnostic and/or operative laparoscopy, a minimally invasive procedure carried out by a gynaecologist on referral. This is the only way to confirm a diagnosis of endometriosis.

■ **Epilepsy****Mr Ben Bradshaw:****[81509]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to (a) promote the NHS Rightcare Epilepsy Toolkit and (b) implement best practice highlighted in that toolkit on tackling epilepsy mortality.

Helen Whately:

The NHS England and NHS Improvement Rightcare Epilepsy toolkit, endorsed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and developed in partnership with Epilepsy Action, SUDEP Action and Young Epilepsy, provides support for clinicians to understand the priorities in epilepsy care and key actions to take. The toolkit is available at the following link:

www.england.nhs.uk/rightcare/products/pathways/epilepsy-toolkit/

Clinicians should take into account best-practice guidance, including the Rightcare Epilepsy toolkit as well as other guidelines produced by NHS England and NHS Improvement and NICE, when tackling epilepsy mortality and providing care for people suffering with epilepsy.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:**[81511]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking in response to the recent Learning Disability Mortality Review's (LeDeR) recommendation that epilepsy safety should be prioritised with basic safety measures including (a) the completion of SUDEP Action's SUDEP and Seizure Safety Checklist and (b) regular risk assessments integrated into care to prevent future avoidable epilepsy deaths; and if he will meet with representatives of SUDEP Action to discuss the Government's plans.

Helen Whately:

As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement on 16 July 2020 ([HCWS378](#)), the Government is clear that we must address the issues raised in the LeDeR report to ensure the care that each individual deserves is provided. We are considering the report and its recommendations in more detail, and will work with stakeholders to determine the specific action that must be taken.

■ Hearing Impairment: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon: [\[81807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the availability of clear face masks to health and social care settings to allow lip reading and communication for deaf patients and staff.

Robert Halfon: [\[81808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many clear face masks have been distributed to health and social care settings to allow lip reading and communication for deaf patients and staff.

Robert Halfon: [\[81809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether clear face masks are available on the NHS Supply Chain for health and social care settings to purchase.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: The United Kingdom Government's national personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement team has been working extremely hard to source clear face masks which comply with UK safety standards.

At the time of writing, the first batch of 20,250 clear face masks were sent out to National Health Service regions over a week ago. The second batch is due to be sent out this week. We have also sent clear masks to NHS Blood and Transplant services, as well as to the National Supply Disruption Response hotline. We also plan for clear masks to be available in social care settings and will communicate to providers how they can access this product as soon as possible.

■ Hyperactivity: Mental Health Services

Alex Sobel: [\[82336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2020 to Question 68456, if he will publish the membership of the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Implementation Working Group within the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

Helen Whately:

At the request of the Department, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) worked with NHS England and NHS Improvement to convene a national working group on supporting the implementation of NICE recommendations on the diagnosis and management of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This is a multidisciplinary group, made up of service users, national policy leads, commissioners, providers, and professional organisations, and includes representatives from:

- NICE;
- The Department of Health and Social Care;

- NHS England and NHS Improvement;
- Public Health England;
- Health Education England;
- The Department for Education;
- NHS Digital;
- The Ministry of Justice;
- Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust;
- AADD-UK;
- ADHD Foundation;
- The Maudsley Hospital (national service);
- The Royal College of Occupational Therapists;
- Oxford ADHD and Autism Centre;
- The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health;
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists;
- University College London;
- The Royal College of Nursing;
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust;
- The University of Exeter;
- Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire Strategic Clinical Network;
- North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust;
- Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust; and
- Greater Manchester Health and Care Commissioning.

Alex Sobel:

[82337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 3.33 in the NHS Long Term Plan, what progress his Department has made on the implementation of support packages for children with ADHD.

Helen Whately:

NHS England wrote to healthcare leaders on 30 July 2020 setting out the actions required for phase 3 of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes re-stating targets for clinical commissioning groups to increase investment in services for people with a learning disability and autism in line with the Mental Health Investment Standard. It also asks systems to maintain the growth in the number of children and young people accessing care, ensure all services are restored and advertised, and proactively review all patients in community health services and asking general practitioners to ensure these patients are identified on their registers.

We recognise that there remains more to do to improve diagnosis and support for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

■ Medical Equipment

Layla Moran:

[\[84732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether medicines and medical supplies will be treated differently at the UK-EU border to other items following the transition period.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: The Border and Protocol Delivery Group's (BPDG) recently published Border Operating Model sets out the processes for importing and exporting goods, including additional requirements that will be needed for importing and exporting certain medical products, such as medicines that are controlled goods. The Department is working closely with BPDG and HM Revenue and Customs to ensure trader readiness to comply with the Border Operating Model.

To further support the flow of critical goods, medicines and medical products have been designated category 1 status, and we have put in place additional contingencies through our multi-layered approach to help ensure the supply of medicines and medical products at the end of the Transition Period.

■ Mental Health Services

Munira Wilson:

[\[82462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with a pre-existing mental health condition who have been unable to access treatment during the covid-19 outbreak will be able to access that treatment in the next two months.

Matt Vickers:

[\[82589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people (a) with mental health issues and (b) who have not been able to access that support during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business throughout this time. NHS community, talking therapies and children and young people's services have deployed innovative digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support.

We have previously issued tailored guidance to help people deal with their mental health and wellbeing on GOV.UK and are promoting this through the 'Every Mind Matters' website. For those with severe needs or in crisis, NHS mental health providers have established all-age 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines.

As part of wider NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance concerning the restoration of non-COVID-19 services, mental health services have been asked to proactively review all patients on community mental health teams' caseloads and increase therapeutic activity and supportive interventions to prevent relapse or escalation of mental health needs for people with severe mental illness in the community.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Mick Whitley:

[\[82421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to increase funding for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in response to recent trends in the number of young people experiencing mental ill-health during the covid-19 outbreak and lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We want to ensure that all children and young people experiencing mental ill health can access the help and support they need and that schools and colleges, parents and carers can support children's mental health and wellbeing throughout the autumn.

We remain committed to investing at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023-24 through the NHS Long Term Plan. This funding underpins our aim for an additional 345,000 children and young people to be able to access support through National Health Service-funded services or school- and college-based mental health support teams.

■ **Mental Health Services: Coronavirus**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[81564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase mental health support as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England and other key partners to take an expert look at what we might anticipate by way of need and plan for how to support mental health and wellbeing throughout the next few weeks and months.

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

■ NHS: Disciplinary Proceedings

Sir Alan Campbell:

[81583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase disclosure to families involved in complaints on disciplinary procedures within the NHS.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not have plans to increase disclosure to families involved in complaints on disciplinary procedures within the National Health Service. Disciplinary procedures including disciplinary investigations are internal matters between an employee and employer. This information is of a confidential and sensitive nature and disclosure of any details to a third party would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018. Any exceptions where disclosure may need to be considered would have to be in line with the Data Protection Act and would normally require the consent of the individual involved.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service has produced guidance on the handling of information obtained as part of an investigation and can be found at the following link:

https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/1043/Discipline-and-grievances-at-work-The-Acas-guide/pdf/DG_Guide_Feb_2019.pdf

■ Palliative Care

Scott Benton:

[82516]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the new guidelines for do not resuscitate orders will be published; and how that guidance will prevent such orders being applied without patient consent.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working on revised, patient-facing information on Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) and where to get support. This document will help clarify that people are meant to be engaged in conversations before a DNACPR recommendation is made and how to ask for a review, if such recommendation is made. The guidance will be published shortly following consultation with key stakeholders and people with lived experience.

■ Patients: Monitoring

Robert Halfon:

[81811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 July 2020 to Question 71027 on Patients: Monitoring, what steps his Department is taking to close staffing gaps in the elderly care sector; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing new remote monitoring technologies to help improve the quality of care for patients and safety for health workers.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: In April to July this year, we increased the national recruitment campaign in order to attract more people into social care with sustained activity across broadcast, digital and social media. The campaign highlighted the vital role that the social care workforce has played during the pandemic, along with the longer-term opportunity of working in social care.

We are also working with the Department for Work and Pensions to provide job centre work coaches with resources to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers, including those who may have recently lost their jobs working in hard hit sectors such as hospitality, tourism and retail.

The NHS Long Term Plan published last year set out our plan for greater use of digital technology and devices to transform care, including remote monitoring to support patients digitally and help National Health Service clinicians to predict and prevent events that might otherwise lead to a spell in hospital.

■ Pets: Coronavirus**Elliot Colburn:**[\[82455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to local authorities to enable them to meet their obligation under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that pets, which are considered property of an individual, are looked after if an individual is hospitalised as a result of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to protect the moveable property (which includes pets) of adults with care and support needs, who are in hospital or are away from home in accommodation such as care homes.

We have provided £3.7 billion to local authorities through un-ringfenced grants so they can address the expenditure pressures they are facing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate**Justin Madders:**[\[82044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women of child bearing potential receive prescriptions for Valproate in England.

Justin Madders:[\[82045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been (a) exposed to Valproate in pregnancy, (b) harmed by Valproate in pregnancy and (c) diagnosed with Fetal Valproate Spectrum Disorder, since April 2018.

Justin Madders:[\[82046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been harmed by the use of Valproate in pregnancy since 1973.

Justin Madders:

[\[82047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) women with (i) epilepsy and (ii) bipolar disorder who are prescribed Valproate and (b) their children receive the healthcare they require.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has been monitoring trends in the prescribing of sodium valproate in women and girls to assess the impact of regulatory restrictions including the introduction of the Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PPP) in April 2018.

Data from the NHS Business Services Authority show that in the second quarter (April-June) of 2020 13,574 women of child-bearing age (14-45 years) were dispensed with a prescription for valproate in England.

The number of pregnancies estimated to have been exposed to valproate in the United Kingdom during 2018 and 2019 were 370 and 190 respectively. These estimates are extrapolated from data from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink as national data are not collected. No data are available on the number of children harmed by valproate or the number of diagnoses with Fetal Valproate Spectrum Disorder since 2018.

The number of children harmed by the use of valproate in pregnancy since 1973 is not precisely known. However, an estimate has been made of in the region of 20,000.

The MHRA is working on developing a valproate registry, the main aims of which would be to monitor the use of valproate in girls and women in the UK and compliance with the current regulatory requirements, and to identify and monitor outcomes in any children born to women on valproate. There has been a gradual decline in prescribing of valproate to women of childbearing age over a number of years but more needs to be done to reduce prescribing to the minimum. The MHRA is working with the National Health Service and professional regulators to drive forward compliance with the PPP and ensure that women with epilepsy and bipolar disorder receive the healthcare they require.

■ Radioisotopes

Layla Moran:

[\[84731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure access to medical radio-isotopes in the event that an agreement is not reached on a future relationship with the EU by the end of the transition period.

Layla Moran:

[\[84734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the public have uninterrupted access to over the counter medicines in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: The Department, in consultation with the devolved administrations and Crown Dependencies, is working with trade bodies, product suppliers, and the health and care system in England to make detailed plans to help ensure continued supply of medicines and medical products, including medical radioisotopes and over-the-counter medicines, to the whole of the United Kingdom at the end of the transition period in all scenarios.

The Department understands that a flexible approach to preparedness may be required for medicines that cannot be stockpiled, such as some medical radioisotopes. We have asked suppliers of those products to use airfreight, which some suppliers are already doing now.

Further detail on the plans to help ensure continuity of medical supplies has been communicated to suppliers, and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-medicines-and-medical-products-suppliers-3-august-2020/letter-to-medicine-suppliers-3-august-2020>

■ Social Services: Coronavirus**Helen Hayes:****[78776]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of agency care staff who are able to access weekly covid-19 testing.

Helen Whately:

All agency staff working in care homes are eligible to access weekly COVID-19 testing through the care home they work in. Regular retesting was initially rolled out for care homes specialising in care for over 65s and/or those with dementia. All other adult care homes are now eligible to place orders for test kits to begin regular retesting.

Test results do not differentiate between agency staff and permanent care home staff.

■ Social Services: Recruitment**Sir Mark Hendrick:****[81549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to recruit workers to the social care sector from within the UK.

Helen Whately:

In order to attract more people into social care, in April to July we rapidly increased the national recruitment campaign – with sustained activity across broadcast, digital and social media. The campaign highlighted the vital role that the social care workforce has played during the pandemic, along with the longer-term opportunity of working in care.

We are also working with the Department for Work and Pensions to provide job centre work coaches with resources to promote adult social care careers to

jobseekers, including those who may have recently lost their jobs working in hard hit sectors such as hospitality, tourism and retail.

■ Tomography: Artificial Intelligence

Martyn Day: [\[82150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the value of artificial intelligence to reading PET CT scans.

Martyn Day: [\[82158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of using artificial intelligence to read PET CT scans.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service Artificial Intelligence (AI) Laboratory is undertaking a discovery project to look at medical imaging, which will examine the value and benefit of the use of AI in medical imaging.

The potential for the application of AI methodologies to PET/CT imaging has been widely investigated in the research community. From the academic and commercial research performed to date, AI methodologies in PET/CT have been shown to provide benefit in, but not limited to: the improvement of image quality and lowering of CT dose delivered to the patient; lesion and disease detection; tumour segmentation; and in the prediction of disease recurrence.

■ Ventilators: Procurement

Helen Hayes: [\[73014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Chancellor's summer economic update of 8 July 2020, how much of the £1 billion allocated to procure additional ventilators to support the NHS has been allocated to indemnify designers and manufacturers of Rapidly Manufactured Ventilator Systems for (a) claims relating to infringement of third-party intellectual property rights and (b) product liability claims resulting from defective equipment.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 July 2020]: The Government granted indemnities to some participants in the Ventilator Challenge, assuming liability for some of the product and intellectual property risks involved in manufacturing ventilators to a much shorter timescale than usual and with significantly different supply chains. This ensured machines were made available for use in the National Health Service to treat patients much more quickly than they otherwise would have been. To date there have been no claims against these indemnities and therefore no costs incurred to the Government in relation to them.

HOME OFFICE**■ Hampshire Constabulary: Recruitment**

Stephen Morgan: [\[86747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of the 156 new police officers recruited to Hampshire Constabulary will be frontline police officers.

Stephen Morgan: [\[86748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the job titles of each of the 156 new police officers recruited to Hampshire Constabulary will be.

Stephen Morgan: [\[86749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the job titles of each of the 18 new police officers recruited to Hampshire Constabulary serving in Portsmouth will be.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 over the next three years.

Hampshire Constabulary has been allocated 156 for year one and has recruited 31 officers towards this figure.

It is up to operationally independent Chief Constables to decide how the additional officers are deployed, including roles and job titles.

■ Visas: Travel Restrictions

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[86739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will permit the extension of visas where the person with the expiring visa cannot get a flight to their home country.

Kevin Foster:

As is already stated in the published guidance on exceptional assurance for visa applicants in the UK and abroad: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-uk-visa-applicants-and-temporary-uk-residents>, if you intend to leave the UK but have not been able to do so and you have a visa or leave which expires between 1 September and 31 October 2020 you may request additional time to stay, also known as 'exceptional assurance', by contacting the coronavirus immigration team (CIT). <https://hsforms.smartcdn.co.uk/webform.html>

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ High Rise Flats: Insulation****Mike Amesbury:****[84343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what (a) types and (b) heights of buildings an External Wall System review should be carried out.

Christopher Pincher:

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) have published guidance on the use of the EWS1 form: <https://www.rics.org/uk/news-insight/latest-news/fire-safety/cladding-qa/>

The guidance states that the EWS1 form is to be used to assess buildings 18 metres or more with combustible material; that it can be used on buildings below 18 metres where there are specific concerns; and that in such cases a rationale to justify its request is required.

■ House Insurance**Shabana Mahmood:****[86620]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the (a) dates and (b) subjects of the (i) discussions he has had with (ii) representations he has received from the Association of British Insurers in relation to building safety remediation and insurance premiums over the last 12 months and (iii) the outcomes of those discussions.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety Minister has held frequent meetings with the insurance industry since his appointment in March, at which representatives from the Association of British Insurers have been present. Meetings have been focussed on the pace of remediating high rise buildings, the affordability of buildings insurance for such buildings and solutions to those challenges. Ministers have encouraged the insurance sector to propose options to improve PII availability for key fire safety work and we are working with the industry to develop potential solutions. We will continue to engage a wide range of stakeholders in consideration of these issues.

■ Leasehold**Shabana Mahmood:****[86617]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to carry out an impact assessment of the Building Safety Bill on leaseholders who currently live in properties which have been identified as having flammable cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

An Economic Impact Assessment was published alongside the draft Building Safety Bill on 20th July 2020. An updated version of this assessment will be available when

the Bill is introduced, setting out the cost and impact of all measures in the Bill, including those on leaseholders.

The Government is clear that leaseholders should not face unaffordable costs to ensure their homes are safe, and the Government has provided funding to speed up the removal of unsafe cladding.

■ Local Plans: Wolverhampton South West

Stuart Anderson:

[\[84739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that Wolverhampton South West constituents are consulted on future local planning decisions.

Christopher Pincher:

The planning reforms set out in the Planning for the Future White paper will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with the planning system. The best way to bring forward new, significant development is by improving community engagement and input at an earlier stage in the planning process. At the plan making stage, people will have the opportunity to comment on local plans and have their say on the location and standard of new development. This will give certainty to local communities that development will be in the areas best identified for growth. There will still be the opportunity for people to comment on planning applications where these are required.

Constituents of South West Wolverhampton will be able to have their say on the emerging Black Country Plan, which covers all the Black Country Local Authorities and is currently being produced. A draft of the Plan will be ready next year and residents are strongly encouraged to have their say once it is available for comment.

■ Property: Sales

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[86577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of adopting a property buying process with legally binding missives in England.

Christopher Pincher:

As we set out in the Government response to the Call for Evidence on improving the home buying and selling process published in April 2018, adopting a property buying process with legally binding missives would require a fundamental re-engineering of the way in which houses are bought and sold in England.

We think that it may be possible to deliver many of the benefits of binding missives without the associated disruption through the adoption of a standardised reservation agreement. These agreements would see buyers and sellers commit to going ahead with the transaction and suffering a financial penalty if they withdrew without good reason, and these could be accommodated within the current process. Government is currently working with industry to evaluate the potential of these agreements.

■ Research: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[84234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether support for R&D will be made available through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

The Government understands the importance of local growth funding to places and people and is committed to creating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to succeed European structural funds, providing vital investment in local economies, cutting out bureaucracy and levelling up those parts of the UK whose economies are furthest behind

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to targeting the UK Shared Prosperity Fund at the UK's specific needs, at a minimum matching the size of European structural funds in each nation. Final decisions on the design of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will need to be made through a cross-Government Spending Review, and we will set out further plans for the fund in due course.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

Emily Thornberry:

[\[84666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 21 August 2018 air-strike on fishing boats in Eritrean Waters was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[84667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 20 April 2018 air-strike on a vehicle in Mawza was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[84668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 11 March 2019 air-strike on a village in Kushar was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84669\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 20 November 2019 air-strike on a market in Souq Al-Raqou was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84670\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 27 November 2019 air-strike on a market in Souq Al-Raqou was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 24 December 2019 air-strike on a market in Souq Al-Raqou was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 4 August 2017 air-strike on a house in Saada was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 3 July 2017 air-strike on a house in Nobat 'Amer was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 18 July 2017 air-strike on a grocery shop in al-Hamli was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international

humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 9 June 2017 air-strike on a neighbourhood in al-Qoubari was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 25 August 2017 air-strike on apartment buildings in Faj Attan was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the 'small number' of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[84678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 10 September 2016 air-strike on a water well in Arhab was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 21 September 2016 air-strike on a neighbourhood in Souq al-Hinood was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 22 January 2016 air-strike on a house and clothes storage facility in Bait Baws was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 28 January

2016 air-strike on a house in Faj Attan was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 9 February 2016 air-strike on a house in Bait Maiyad was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 25 February 2016 air-strike on houses in al-Lail was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 27 February 2016 air-strike on a market in Khulqa was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 12 May 2015 air-strike on a market in Zabid was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[85988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 13 September 2015 air-strike in the Sanaa Old City was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[85989\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 2 December 2015 air-strike on a Médecins Sans Frontières medical facility in Al Khashabeh was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a 'possible' violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[85990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 18 September 2015 air-strike on a house and workshop on Marib Street, Sanaa was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[85991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 18 September 2015 air-strike on houses in the Sanaa Old City was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[85992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 23 September 2015 air-strike on houses in Al-Asbahi was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The International Humanitarian Law Analysis was applied to 310 incidents. As at 30th April 2020, there were 528 allegations entered on the MOD Tracker, of which 19 were assessed to be duplicates. A further 166 were assessed to be "not credible", which means the information and intelligence available indicates that the alleged events were not likely to have happened or were not likely to have involved fixed-wing aircraft operated by the Saudi-led Coalition. In addition, 33 allegations were awaiting assessment.

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law 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.

Emily Thornberry: [\[86585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 7 October 2015 air-strike on a wedding in Sanaban was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[86586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 23 September 2015 air-strike on a ceramics factory in Matna was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[86587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 24 July 2015 air-strikes on residential compounds in Mokha was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[86588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 30 March 2015 air-strike on a displaced persons camp in Mazraq was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry: [\[86590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 22 September 2016 air-strike on a water pump factory in Sanaa was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 13 September 2016 air-strike on a water pump factory in Sanaa was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 17 August 2015 air-strikes on a port in Hodeidah were (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 4 June 2015 air-strikes on houses in Saada were (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 3 June 2015 air-strikes on houses in Sabr was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 12 July 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Sanhan was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 12 July 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Shu'oub was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international

humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[86598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 27 September 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Midi was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law, and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The International Humanitarian Law Analysis was applied to 310 incidents. As at 30th April 2020, there were 528 allegations entered on the MOD Tracker, of which 19 were assessed to be duplicates. A further 166 were assessed to be “not credible”, which means the information and intelligence available indicates that the alleged events were not likely to have happened or were not likely to have involved fixed-wing aircraft operated by the Saudi-led Coalition. In addition, 33 allegations were awaiting assessment.

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a ‘possible’ breach of international humanitarian law 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.

■ **Board of Trade: Meetings**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[86738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, (a) on what date and (b) where the next meeting of the Board of Trade is planned to take place.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The date and location of the Board’s next meeting is still to be decided.

JUSTICE

■ **Prisoners' Release: Coronavirus**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[84183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress has been made on restarting resettlement day release during the covid-19 outbreak for people in prisons in England and Wales.

Lucy Frazer:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) temporarily suspended release on temporary licence (ROTL), with some exceptions, as part of a range of measures to manage the impact of Covid-19 on prisons.

Thanks to the success of these measures in helping to control infection rates, prisons are now easing restrictions in line with the National Framework for Prison Regimes, and

HMPPS is working closely with public health authorities to support prisons to re-introduce ROTL where it is safe and practicable to do so. HMPPS is issuing prisons with Exceptional Delivery Models (EDMs) which guide governors in relaxing restrictions and resuming prison regimes. An EDM for workplace ROTL was issued in July and some workplace ROTL has already resumed. An EDM for other forms of ROTL, for example to maintain family ties, was issued in August.

HMPPS is adopting a cautious approach to recovery which will be carefully monitored. The safety of prisoners and staff must be the priority but, where it can be resumed safely, ROTL will continue to contribute to positive resettlement outcomes and reduced reoffending.

■ Prisons: Staff**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[84179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons submitted applications to the HM Prison & Probation Service Operational Stability Panel for an Enhanced Payment Plus Bonus Scheme on the basis of staffing shortfalls during August 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

Six prisons submitted applications to the HM Prison & Probation Service Operational Stability Panel for an Enhanced Payment Plus Bonus Scheme on the basis of staffing shortfalls during August 2020.

■ Probation and Remand in Custody: Coronavirus**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[84180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the routine maintenance of custodial facilities and probation premises; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reduced maintenance of such facilities for (a) people in custody and on probation, (b) prison and probation staff and (c) operational capacity.

Lucy Frazer:

Delivery of routine maintenance of custodial facilities and probation premises has been maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All of our prisons and most of our approved premises have remained open and operational. We will ensure that probation buildings are reopened in a safe, controlled manner, ensuring that COVID-secure guidelines are adhered to.

■ Probation: Standards**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[84181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an estimate of the proportion of people under the care of probation who were not receiving one or more support services that they had previously received during August 2020 including (a) mental health, (b) substance misuse and (c) housing support services.

Lucy Frazer:

Public protection remains the number one priority in the probation system and exceptional delivery models have been put in place to ensure public safety and support offenders.

For offenders leaving custody who required accommodation support, Through the Gate services continued to be delivered during and after lockdown and remote one to one services for those on probation continued to be delivered, where practicably possible. This included services such as employment, training and education, accommodation services and wellbeing support, such as counselling.

■ Remand in Custody**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[84184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on the number of cells holding both convicted and unconvicted people in custody.

Lucy Frazer:

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

Unconvicted prisoners should be held in separate accommodation from convicted prisoners where Governors consider this can be reasonably done. Cell sharing is permitted between unconvicted and convicted prisoners if the unconvicted prisoner's consent has been obtained.

As at Friday 28th August, 2,866 cells/rooms (which were certified to hold two or more prisoners) were holding both unconvicted and convicted prisoners. The detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

PRIME MINISTER**■ Health Professions: Correspondence****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:** [\[84317\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, how many personal letters he has written to bereaved families of NHS and care staff who have died from covid-19.

Boris Johnson:

I am acutely aware of the grief, heartbreak and loss suffered by families across the country as a result of this global pandemic.

I know first-hand the effect this terrible virus can have on someone and will always be thankful for the life saving care that I received at St Thomas' hospital.

I write to the families of all NHS and care staff who have died from covid-19 in order to offer my condolences and to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of their loved ones.

In order to write, my office requires the relevant organisation to receive prior consent from the families that their personal information may be shared – which necessarily creates a slight time lag. I have so far sent 55 letters and will write to more families as soon as my office receives the relevant consents and information.

TRANSPORT■ **Airports: Coronavirus****Mr Mark Harper:****[86578]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his oral statement of 7 September, Official Report, column 365, on International Travel, if he will make it his policy to implement a covid-19 testing regime, with airports being required to procure the necessary testing and laboratory capacity, in order to reduce quarantine length.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government is actively working on the practicalities of using testing to release people from self-isolation earlier than 14 days. Officials across the Government are working with health experts with the aim of cutting the self-isolation period without adding to infection risk or infringing on our overall NHS test capacity. The Secretary of State for Transport has committed to updating the House on testing of international arrivals in the coming weeks.

Public Health England prepared a paper on the effectiveness of 'double testing' travellers coming to the UK. The paper is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-investigation-into-the-effectiveness-of-double-testing-travellers-incoming-to-the-uk-for-signs-of-covid-19-17-june-2020>

Drew Hendry:**[86692]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing covid-19 testing for all arrivals at airports.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government is actively working on the practicalities of using testing to release people from self-isolation earlier than 14 days. Officials across the Government are working with health experts with the aim of cutting the self-isolation period without adding to infection risk or infringing on our overall NHS test capacity. The Secretary

of State for Transport has committed to updating the House on testing of international arrivals in the coming weeks.

■ **Aviation: Coronavirus**

Seema Malhotra: [\[86671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish his strategy for the recovery of the aviation sector following the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Stephenson:

The government have been developing a recovery plan for aviation, and are aiming for this to be published this autumn.

Seema Malhotra: [\[86673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) catering, (b) security, (c) hospitality and (d) ground handling companies in the aviation sector on the (i) challenges those businesses face as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and (ii) adequacy of Government support to maintain employment in their businesses.

Andrew Stephenson:

We have worked closely with the sector alongside Treasury colleagues on the question of Government support. As we have always stated Government stands ready to support companies during this pandemic. Companies can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures, including: schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees. If firms find themselves in trouble because of coronavirus, and have exhausted the measures already available to them, the Government is prepared to enter discussions with individual companies seeking bespoke support as a last resort, having exhausted all other options. Any intervention would need to represent value for money for taxpayers.

It would be inappropriate to comment on discussions held with individual companies.

■ **Aviation: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Seema Malhotra: [\[86672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of a flexible extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for businesses in the aviation sector.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with HM Treasury regarding the challenges facing the aviation sector as a result of COVID-19. The sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry will be able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time.

■ Crossrail Line: Finance

Alan Brown:

[\[84704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of the Crossrail project; and what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on allocating additional funding from the public purse to that project.

Rachel Maclean:

In August 2020, Crossrail Limited announced that they will require an additional £450m in funding to finance the remaining costs of the project. This is in addition to the £400 to £650m funding they announced that they would require in November 2019. Crossrail Limited have stated that work is ongoing to finalise their cost estimates.

Crossrail Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Transport for London, will require a revised funding package and discussions are ongoing to ensure it remains fair to UK taxpayers with London as the primary beneficiary bearing the costs.

■ Crossrail: Finance

Alan Brown:

[\[84703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been loaned from the public purse to Crossrail Limited; and what the (a) timescales, (b) rates of interest and (c) other terms of repayment are on those loans.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has not made any direct loans to Crossrail Limited.

In December 2018, the Government approved a £2.15bn funding package whereby the Department for Transport would provide a loan of £1.3bn to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and a loan of £750m to Transport for London (TfL) to finance the remaining costs of the project. The interest and loan repayment will occur annually over the next 10 years. The terms of the repayment are commercially sensitive.

■ Department for Transport: Personnel Management

John Stevenson:

[\[84201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in his Department's human resources section in April 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In the Department of Transport there were a total of 342.74 FTE employed in the human resources functions at 30th April 2020

The breakdown between the central Department and the Executive Agencies is as follows:

DFTc	106.0
DVLA	81.9

DFTc	106.0
DVSA	126.4
MCA	24.0
VCA	4.5
Total	342.7

Please note, the above figures relate to staff working in teams which are part of the organisations HR functions (at DVSA this includes Driver Examiner Trainers) but do not include any contingent labour.

■ Driving Instruction: Coronavirus

Drew Hendry:

[86693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has held with the DVSA as to the ongoing safety of the continuation of three in a vehicle ADI standards checks during the covid-19 pandemic.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has consulted with Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive to ensure it can conduct approved driving instructor (ADI) standards checks safely with three people in the car, during the COVID-19 pandemic. PHE has said the DVSA's standard operating procedures comply with general public health principles and existing guidance for the reduction of transmission risk. The DVSA has also cleared its standard operating procedures and risk assessments with the trade unions.

The DVSA will continue to keep its guidance under review in line with Government guidance.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Iron and Steel

Lucy Powell:

[86674]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of steel used in phase one of the High Speed 2 project is British steel.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government's guidance on the procurement of steel was published in November 2015 and subsequently updated in December 2016. All major government projects are required to take cognisance of the Crown Commercial Service Procurement Policy Note 11/16: "Procuring Steel in Major Projects - Revised Guidance" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-1116-procuring-steel-in-major-projects-revised-guidance>).

Whilst HS2 Ltd does not directly buy steel, it does apply a strategic and transparent approach to the sourcing of steel for the HS2 Programme through its Tier 1

contractors and their supply chains. HS2 Ltd ensures a fair procurement process which complies with UK procurement law and the Government policy on the procurement of steel.

Lucy Powell:

[86675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of steel used in phase two of the High Speed 2 rail line is planned to be British steel.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government's guidance on the procurement of steel was published in November 2015 and subsequently updated in December 2016. All major government projects are required to take cognisance of the Crown Commercial Service Procurement Policy Note 11/16: "Procuring Steel in Major Projects - Revised Guidance" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-1116-procuring-steel-in-major-projects-revised-guidance>).

Whilst HS2 Ltd does not directly buy steel, it does apply a strategic and transparent approach to the sourcing of steel for the HS2 Programme through its Tier 1 contractors and their supply chains. HS2 Ltd ensures a fair procurement process which complies with UK procurement law and the Government policy on the procurement of steel.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Noise**

Catherine West:

[86731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to bring forward proposals on limiting the noise emitted from vehicles as a result of the noise camera trial launched in June 2019.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes the impact of road noise on health, wellbeing and the natural environment seriously. Vehicles are required to meet strict noise limits before being placed on the market and should not be altered to increase their noise level.

The Department's initial trials of a prototype noise camera have now concluded and the results will be published shortly.

■ **Railways: Fares**

Caroline Lucas:

[84187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to (a) waive the RPI regulated rail fares increase for 2021, (b) guarantee that commercial fares will be frozen for 2021 under any new or extended Emergency Measures Agreements reached with train operating companies and (c) freeze all fares on the franchises which are currently publicly operated; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Any increase in rail fares will help fund crucial investment in our railways. Taxpayer support has been vital to keep trains running throughout the Coronavirus pandemic

and it is only fair that passengers also contribute to maintaining and improving the services they use.

We have already cut costs for thousands of young people with the 16-17 Saver Railcard, and will be rolling out a new Veteran's Railcard to give over 830,000 former service personnel, who do not otherwise benefit from discounted rail travel, up to a third off their rail costs.

■ Tourism: Coronavirus

Scott Benton:

[\[84746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing financial assistance during autumn and winter 2020 for the travel sector and travel agents sector to support that sector through the covid-19 pandemic.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the travel sector as a result of COVID-19. The sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry will be able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time.

This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme which facilitates access to finance for businesses affected by the outbreak. Firms are also able to access 'Time to Pay' scheme which eases restrictions with tax bills and VAT deferrals.

The Department for Transport and other departments are in close contact with the travel sector ensuring that the Government is kept fully aware of the latest developments with all firms and to understand where additional policy measures should be considered to address specific industry issues.

■ Tourism: Government Assistance

Scott Benton:

[\[84745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with representatives from (a) the UK travel industry and (b) travel agents on bespoke packages of support for the sector during the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport is in regular contact with the travel industry regarding the challenges facing the sector as a result of COVID-19. The sector is crucial to the UK's economy and businesses across the industry are able to draw on the unprecedented package of economic measures we have put in place during this time.

This includes a Bank of England scheme for firms to raise capital, two business interruption loan guarantee schemes for different sizes of business, Time to Pay flexibilities with tax bills, financial support for employees and VAT deferrals.

The Department for Transport is in close contact with the travel sector ensuring that the Government is kept fully aware of the latest developments with all firms and to understand where additional policy measures and address specific industry issues.

TREASURY

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Grahame Morris:

[\[86639\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to Question 83759 answered on 7 September 2020, what impact assessments have been carried out on the financial implications to small breweries operating between 2,100 and 5,000 hectolitres, of the findings from the Government's first stage review into Small Brewer's Relief.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government will consult on further elements of reform of Small Brewers Relief in the Autumn. Only after that consultation, once decisions are made about (for example) the shape of the new taper, can an impact assessment be undertaken.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[86575\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of supporting commercial coach hire companies in (a) relation to their fuel costs and (b) extending the furlough scheme beyond October 2020 to assist with the payment of drivers' wages for those periods outside the morning and afternoon school runs; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has delivered on its promise to stand by businesses and workers throughout the pandemic and has provided one of the most comprehensive and generous packages of support globally. This support has included billions of pounds for businesses through loans and grants, support for millions of jobs through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

Coach companies, along with other businesses, continue to have access to a range of support measures including, but not limited to:

- A Discretionary Grant Fund for Local Authorities in England
- The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS)
- The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBL) for small and micro enterprises
- VAT deferral for up to 12 months (for the period 20 March – 30 June 2020)
- The Time To Pay scheme, through which businesses in financial distress, and with outstanding tax liabilities, can receive support with their tax affairs

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

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme opened to all employers on 20th April.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Mick Whitley:

[\[86760\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme and Self-Employment Income Support scheme for industries that are (a) not able to safely return to work and (b) experiencing sustained economic disruption as a result of the covid-19 pandemic; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has put in place a broad set of policies to support businesses and individuals during COVID-19, and the CJRS and SEISS are supporting millions of people.

The CJRS remains open until the end of October while the second and final round of SEISS claims has just opened for applications.

As the economy reopens, the Government must adjust its support to ensure people continue to get back to work, while protecting the UK economy and people's livelihoods.

In the second phase of the Government's response, the targeted Plan for Jobs will support jobseekers, protecting jobs and creating jobs.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Derek Twigg:

[\[86548\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a scheme similar to the Eat Out to Help Out scheme for concerts, festivals and other live events as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the extreme disruption the necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors like events and the live performance industry.

That is why the Chancellor has already announced unprecedented support for individuals and businesses, to protect against the current economic emergency. This includes a £1.57 billion support package for eligible cultural and heritage organisations (including the performing arts and live music venues) and a temporary reduction in VAT, designed to support businesses and jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry (including admission to shows, theatres, concerts, circuses and similar events).

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.

We will continue to monitor the impact of government support on public services, businesses, individuals and sectors as we respond to this pandemic, and keep all policies under review.

■ Exports: VAT

Nickie Aiken: [\[84344\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the results of the consultation on duty-free and tax-free goods carried by passengers which closed on 20 May 2020.

Nickie Aiken: [\[84345\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of responses to Question 9 in the consultation on duty-free and tax-free goods carried by passengers supported extending the VAT Retail Export Scheme to visitors from EU member states.

Nickie Aiken: [\[84346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the digitalisation of the VAT Retail Export Scheme, announced in 2016, will be completed.

Jesse Norman:

The Government continued to explore the potential digitisation of the VAT Retail Export Scheme in parallel with the consultation on the approach to duty-free and tax-free goods in Great Britain. There were a range of views submitted and the Government has today published a summary of responses to the consultation.

After reviewing the long-term approach to tax-free goods as part of that consultation, the Government announced today that the VAT Retail Export Scheme would be withdrawn from 1 January 2021 and would therefore not be digitised or extended to EU residents.

Nickie Aiken: [\[84347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what activities the HMRC Policy Lab has undertaken in its research on the digitalisation of the VAT Retail Export Scheme; and which companies and organisations they have (a) met and (b) observed as part of that research.

Jesse Norman:

The HMRC Policy Lab carried out site visits, observed processes and conducted interviews and surveys in relation to the VAT Retail Export Scheme. This involved a wide variety of stakeholders including Border Force, retailers, VAT refund providers, refund agents, airport operators and shoppers. This research took place in parallel with a consultation on tax-free and duty-free goods.

After reviewing the long-term approach to tax-free goods as part of that consultation, the Government announced today that the VAT Retail Export Scheme would be withdrawn from 1 January 2021 and would therefore not be digitised or extended to EU residents.

■ Import Duties

Paul Blomfield: [\[85034\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many UK firms applied for a duty deferment account in (a) July 2020 and (b) August 2020.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC received 58 applications for duty deferment accounts in July and 88 in August.

Paul Blomfield: [\[85035\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many UK firms have applied for a duty deferment account for VAT on imported goods.

Jesse Norman:

Since 1 April 2020, 283 UK businesses have applied for a duty deferment account which allows them to defer payments of import VAT.

■ Leasehold

Shabana Mahmood: [\[86619\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to help leaseholders (a) obtain mortgages or (b) re-mortgage their properties in situations where they are unable to obtain External Wall System (1) forms.

John Glen:

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. Government does not support a blanket approach in EWS1 requests for lower risk properties and is encouraging mortgage lenders to accept other equivalent evidence from building owners for valuation purposes.

■ Mortgages

Daisy Cooper: [\[86761\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to ensure lenders do not demand an EWS1 form for mortgage provision of homes in buildings under 18 metres, unless there is a specific concern of enhanced fire risk from external wall composition.

John Glen:

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. Government does not support a blanket approach in EWS1 requests for lower risk

properties and is encouraging mortgage lenders to accept other equivalent evidence from building owners for valuation purposes.

■ **Mortgages: Coronavirus**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[86576\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will make an assessment of the effect of using the three month mortgage holiday during the covid-19 outbreak on people's (a) credit ratings and (b) ability to access new mortgage finance deals and other financial services; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

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.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme**

Drew Hendry:

[\[86694\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of reopening phases 1 and 2 of the Self Employment Income Support Scheme to provide access to that scheme for individuals who were unable to use it as a result of late filings by accountancy firms of self-employment tax returns for their clients.

Jesse Norman:

Individuals who did not file their 2018/19 tax return are not eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Special provision was made for those who missed the deadline in January, and they were given until 23 April 2020 to submit a return to be included in the SEISS. The SEISS legislation (Direction) clearly states that, for the purposes of SEISS, amounts of trading profits and relevant income are determined by reference to a person's tax returns as at 23 April 2020.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said there will be no further extensions or changes to the SEISS. However, those who missed the filing deadline may still be eligible for other elements of the unprecedented package of financial support provided by the Government. This package includes Bounce Back loans, tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, mortgage holidays, and other business support grants. More information about the full range of business support measures is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

■ Tax Avoidance

Owen Thompson:

[\[86709\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to enable individuals who were unwittingly taken advantage of by loan charge promoters to enter into a settlement with HMRC over loan schemes without having to declare wrongdoing and state that they knew they had avoided tax.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have provided several formal opportunities for taxpayers to settle their use of disguised remuneration (DR) schemes, both prior and subsequent to the announcement of the introduction of the loan charge.

Whenever a settlement agreement is agreed with HMRC, there must be a legally binding contract. HMRC do not require individuals settling their DR use to admit to wrongdoing, or to declare that they knew they had avoided tax, when agreeing these contracts.

Individuals who wish to use the 5 or 7 year payment instalment arrangements available under the current settlement terms do have to confirm that they are no longer engaged with tax avoidance (as required under the published terms), and this is acknowledged within the settlement contract. Agreeing to this term does not require the taxpayer to declare that they were knowingly engaged in tax avoidance in the past.

■ UK Government Investments

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86569\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has been notified on each occasion by UKGI on matters with the Post Office which are considered to be novel, contentious and repercussive.

John Glen:

HM Treasury should be notified on novel, contentious and repercussive spending.

HM Treasury is not aware of any instance where it has not been notified by UKGI on relevant matters concerning the Post Office which UKGI considers to be novel, contentious, and repercussive.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86570\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether UKGI has delegated authority to take on (a) directly or (b) indirectly (i) assets, (ii) liabilities, (iii) contingent liabilities or (iv) other commitments or obligations in managing shareholdings or the delivery of the objectives, without the consent of his Department.

John Glen:

UKGI's delegated authority is limited to its operating budget of £13.7m, which is, to a material extent, expended on staff costs. At its most recent reporting date of 31 March 2020, UKGI had no assets or liabilities other than its normal operating debtors and creditors, and no contingent liabilities. UKGI has no delegated authority beyond

this to take on (a) directly or (b) indirectly (i) assets, (ii) liabilities, (iii) contingent liabilities or (iv) other commitments or obligations in managing shareholdings or the delivery of the objectives, without the consent of HM Treasury.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86571\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what measures are in place to prevent a member of UKGI sitting as a non-executive member on a Government-owned company while at the same time acting for a private company in the same sector.

John Glen:

All employees of UKGI are prohibited from taking on any additional employment or appointments, directly or indirectly, without prior permission from UKGI, which should not be forthcoming where a conflict of interest arises or is perceived to arise. UKGI's own non-executive directors also comply with this requirement.

■ VAT

Stephen Morgan:

[\[86744\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a VAT regime for goods similar to the EU Goods Status regime in order to limit the financial consequences for UK people losing status under that EU regime after the end of the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

The Treasury keeps all taxes, including VAT, under review. Leaving the EU enables the UK to have its own bespoke VAT system. However, the UK starts off from a regulatory regime aligned to the EU and based on internationally agreed guidelines and principles which will continue to apply after the transition period.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Period Poverty

Sarah Champion:

[\[86064\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what progress the Government's period poverty taskforce has made in its objectives since (a) that taskforce was established and (b) the start of the Parliamentary session.

Sarah Champion:

[\[86065\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps her Department is taking to continue the work of the Period Poverty Taskforce; and when future plans for that taskforce are planned to be announced.

Stuart Anderson:

[\[86753\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Government is taking to (a) combat period poverty and (b) enable young people to help tackle that issue.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Period Poverty Taskforce has begun a programme of work to tackle stigma and shame surrounding menstruation; established research priorities to improve the evidence surrounding period poverty and menstrual stigma in the UK and has begun to identify access barriers and the groups that are most affected by them. In addition to this, The Department for Education launched a new scheme which makes free period products available in state-funded primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in England, to ensure that menstruation does not present a barrier to young people's learning.

The work of the Taskforce was paused on 20 March 2020 in light of COVID-19 to allow the GEO secretariat to be redeployed to respond to the pandemic, and to ensure that we were not asking businesses to volunteer resources at this difficult time. Further announcements on the plans and the work of the Taskforce will be made in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Ethnic Groups****Seema Malhotra:**[\[86059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to improve the (a) recruitment and (b) progression of its BAME staff.

Mims Davies:

The Department is committed to the Civil Service ambition to become the UK's most inclusive employer and increasing the representation of under-represented groups to make DWP more diverse.

We are undertaking work to better understand the lived experiences of BAME colleagues and the career progression barriers they face. For example, we have implemented Listening Circles and held Let's Talk About Race conversations throughout our organisation and are using the insight and feedback captured to help inform our departmental Race Priorities and Plan.

We have strengthened our commitment to Sponsorship and have extended this to all of our Senior Civil Servants with the expectation that their personal intervention will support BAME colleagues to move into new roles/projects to further develop their skills, or move to a role on promotion.

To further support career progression we also continue to actively promote Civil Service development opportunities which include: Future/Senior Leaders Scheme; the Civil Service Ethnic Diversity Programme; and access to the Civil Service Race to the Top staff networks.

We have introduced a departmental Catalyst programme which provides under-represented colleagues at Grades 6 and 7 with access to development opportunities,

inspirational speakers and senior sponsorship to support their career and leadership journeys.

We have implemented a number of improvements to our recruitment and selection methods which include: improved marketing of DWP as a diverse and inclusive employer of choice; mandated ethnic minority representation for our senior recruitment panels; implemented anonymised recruitment to minimise bias; and introduced a new strengths based approach to our recruitment.

■ Redundancy: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[86077]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to support people who have been made redundant as a result of the covid-19 outbreak to (a) access training and skills support and (b) secure suitable alternative employment.

Mims Davies:

We know this is a worrying time for people, and DWP are ready to support anyone impacted by job loss.

In response to covid-19, DWP has established an alternative service to our usual face to face offer. People will be able to access redundancy help and job search advice on the Department's new Job Help campaign website. There's also information on gov.uk. and updated information packs provided to employers to help them signpost employees to the support that is available. The support available includes:

- Connecting people to jobs in the labour market through our [Find a Job](#) website, virtual jobs fairs, Sector-based Work Academy Programmes and mentoring circle opportunities.
- Help with job search including CV writing, interview skills, where to find jobs and how to apply for them.
- Help to identify transferable skills and skills gaps (linked to the local labour market)
- What benefits they may get and how to claim

This service is co-ordinated nationally by the National Employer and Partnership Team (NEPT) and is managed by Jobcentre Plus. Delivery partners include The National Careers Service, local training providers, employers, HMRC, Money Advice Service and the skills bodies in England. These services are offered by equivalents in the devolved administrations PACE (Scotland) and ReAct (Wales). Redundancy support in Northern Ireland is devolved with separate funding and delivery arrangements where no partner support is available In Scotland this is delivered by PACE on behalf of the Scottish Government and in Wales by REACT. Alongside these partners DWP will be offering:

- Training to update skills, learn new ones and gain industry recognised certification that will improve employability.

- Help to overcome barriers to attending training or securing a job or self-employment such as child care costs, necessary tools, work clothes, travel costs etc.

In addition to this the new Kickstart scheme is underway. This is a £2bn programme which will create thousands of new jobs for young people aged between 16-24 who will be offered six-month work placements with wages paid by the UK Government.

DWP are also developing a Job Finding Support package which will help people who have recently lost their job. It will offer a digital service to provide tailored one-to-one job finding support.

The service will provide support to help people increase their employability and provide links to suitable employers.

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

Sarah Olney:

[\[86736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to support universal credit claimants who are shielding due to disability and long-term health conditions as benefit sanctions are reintroduced as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Sarah Olney:

[\[86737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the reintroduction of benefit sanctions in July 2020 effect on universal credit claimants who are still shielding due to (a) disability or (b) long-term health conditions.

Mims Davies:

A claimant's work related requirements are agreed in discussion with their Work Coach and tailored to their individual capability, capacity and specific circumstances, ensuring they are realistic and achievable. Claimants will not be asked to do anything unreasonable in light of the impact of their health condition, and any work related requirements will be compatible with public health guidelines.

Where a claimant has failed to meet their requirements, we will look at any evidence of good reason, including individual circumstances and health considerations, such as shielding, when considering if a sanction is warranted.

An equality analysis has been undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions on the reinstatement of conditionality across affected benefits, and provided to the Secretary of State so she can fulfil her Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) responsibilities. The reintroduction of conditionality and sanctions represents a return to business as usual and not a change in policy which requires direct consultation. The operation of these policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis through consultation with stakeholders.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Michael Gove): [\[HCWS449\]](#)

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met on 10 September at Lancaster House, London. The meeting was chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, and the European Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, alongside the alternate co-chairs of the Committee, the Paymaster General, Penny Mordaunt, and Michel Barnier. Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive and the EU 27 Member States also joined by videolink.

The Committee discussed the UK Internal Market Bill and the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK made clear that the legislative timetable for the Bill would continue as planned and reiterated its commitment to implementing the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Northern Ireland Protocol, and the Decisions of the Joint Committee.

The UK Government also stressed its obligations to the people of Northern Ireland, its determination to uphold the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, and its responsibility to provide good governance for the whole United Kingdom. As co-guarantor, along with Ireland, of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the Government's commitment to that agreement remains absolute.

The UK Government will continue to engage in Joint Committee discussions constructively, with the aim of finding a satisfactory outcome for both sides.

TREASURY

■ Economic Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak): [\[HCWS447\]](#)

Today I can inform the House that I have asked the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to prepare an economic and fiscal forecast to be published in mid to late November.

■ Treasury Update

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Kemi Badenoch): [\[HCWS448\]](#)

The UK has left the European Union and entered a transition period. In light of this new relationship the government has reviewed the excise duty and VAT treatment of goods purchased by individuals for their own use and carried across borders in their luggage. The government is today announcing the rules which will apply to goods carried across borders by passengers travelling to and from Great Britain to countries outside of the

United Kingdom. These changes will apply from 1 January 2021 when the transition period comes to an end.

Currently these reliefs are largely set out in EU legislation, with different rules for those travelling to or from the EU, and those travelling to or from non-EU countries. This will have to be aligned following the transition period so that EU and non-EU passengers are treated equally. At Spring Budget, on 11 March 2020, the government published a consultation on the potential approach to goods carried across borders by passengers. There were a range of views and evidence submitted in response to that consultation and the government has had to balance competing policy objectives, while taking into account the views of stakeholders. A full summary of responses to the consultation has been published alongside this statement.

This announcement focuses primarily on the treatment in GB. The government continues to work with the Joint Committee on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The government is also committed to providing guidance on how the Northern Ireland Protocol will work, including for duty-free and tax-free goods, ahead of the end of the transition period.

The government will make and lay a Statutory Instrument subject to the negative procedure before the House of Commons in due course to give effect to these changes from 1 January 2021. The below summarises the final policy decisions.

Duty-free sales and personal allowances

The government is taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the UK's new relationship with the EU to enable passengers travelling from GB to the EU to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at airports, ports, and train stations on international routes, on the same basis as currently applies to passengers travelling to non-EU destinations. This means passengers travelling from GB won't have to pay UK VAT and excise duty on these purchases of alcohol and tobacco products when they travel to an EU destination. They will also be able to purchase duty-free goods on-board planes on international routes, on international train journeys and ships sailing from GB to a destination outside the UK for consumption on-board and to take-away. This is something that many businesses have raised as part of the consultation and the government will implement this as soon as the transition period ends.

At the same time, passengers travelling to GB from the EU will no longer be able to bring back unlimited amounts of alcohol, tobacco, or other goods (for example, clothing and electronics) for personal use without making a declaration and paying the relevant taxes. Passengers will instead have the option to bring in defined amounts of alcohol, tobacco and other goods purchased from duty- or tax-free shops, or with tax and duty paid on the high street, in the EU without paying the relevant taxes and duties on entry to GB. These personal allowances currently apply to non-EU countries and the government is now ensuring that EU and non-EU passengers are treated equally. The government is also using its new freedoms to significantly increase the current allowances for alcohol for passengers arriving from both EU and non-EU countries. This will allow a reasonable

amount of alcohol to be brought into GB, for example three crates of beer, two cases of still wine and one case of sparkling wine, without the relevant taxes being due. The current levels of allowances will remain for tobacco products and all other goods.

Tax-free sales under the airside extra statutory concession

Currently airside tax-free sales of non-excise goods are permitted under an extra statutory concession for those travelling from the UK to non-EU countries. The government made clear in the consultation that it had a number of concerns over how the benefit is passed on to passengers and that in some instances the relief is not consistent with international tax principles. As such, the government is not extending tax-free sales to passengers travelling to the EU but is instead withdrawing tax-free sales across the UK for all passengers from 1 January 2021.

The VAT Retail Export Scheme

Similarly, the VAT Retail Export Scheme will not be extended to EU visitors and will be withdrawn for non-EU visitors in GB from 1 January 2021. This means that overseas visitors will no longer be able to obtain a VAT refund on items they buy in GB and take home with them in their luggage. The VAT Retail Export Scheme is a costly relief which does not benefit the whole of GB equally, with current use of the scheme largely centred in London. Retailers will instead continue to be able to offer VAT-free shopping, consistent with international principles of taxation, to non-EU visitors who purchase items in store and have them delivered direct to their overseas addresses. Following the end of transition period, this will also be available to EU visitors.