



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 16 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (07:12 P.M., 16 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Renewable Energy

Dr James Davies:

[\[87601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential volume of (a) offshore wind, (b) onshore wind and (c) solar sites which might bid into Contract for Difference Auction Round 4.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government considers a range of matters when setting the parameters for Contracts for Difference allocation rounds, including the anticipated pipeline of eligible projects. We will publish allocation round parameters in advance of the next auction in 2021, when assessments of the potential volume of participants can be informed by the most current information on project pipelines.

Lee Anderson:

[\[87663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the volume of (a) jobs, (b) investment and (c) GVA that could be stimulated throughout the UK in the event that all those onshore wind, solar and offshore wind sites predicted to bid into the Contract for Difference Auction Round 4 are successful in that auction round.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The low carbon economy is a success story, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it will continue to grow as we deliver net zero. The Government has not estimated the volume of jobs, investment and GVA that could directly be created or stimulated as a result of the Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 4. Auction outcomes are dependent on many factors including the auction parameters, which are yet to be set. However, we work closely with industry to maximise the opportunities for UK suppliers from projects with approved Supply Chain Plans.

Lee Anderson:

[\[87664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether there are statutory restrictions on the volume of onshore wind, solar and offshore wind sites that are permitted to secure contracts through a Contracts for Difference auction.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Whilst there are no predetermined limits on the volume of sites permitted to secure contracts through an allocation round, the Government has discretion to apply a capacity cap to an allocation round in order to limit the total capacity of projects awarded contracts in a round. Capacity caps can be used to drive competition in auctions and deliver value for money for consumers. We will publish allocation round

parameters in advance of the next auction in 2021, taking into account a range of factors including the anticipated pipeline of eligible projects.

Simon Fell: [\[87665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the construction of (a) onshore wind, (b) solar and (c) offshore wind sites awarded contracts in Contract for Difference Auction Round 4 will begin in the 2019 Parliament.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Whether construction will begin during the 2019 Parliament will depend on decisions made by individual developers as well as the allocation round delivery years. Delivery years and other allocation round parameters will be published in advance of the next auction in 2021.

Alexander Stafford: [\[87714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the average prospective bidding price of (a) solar, (b) onshore wind and (c) offshore wind sites into Contracts for Difference auction round 4; and what assessment he has made of the implications of those prices for UK electricity costs.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

BEIS sets an administrative strike price for each technology, presented on a price per megawatt hour (MWh) basis, that is the maximum price the Government is willing to offer developers. The bid price is a commercial decision for the developer. The administrative strike prices and allocation round parameters will be published in advance of the next auction in 2021.

■ Renewable Energy: Contracts

Alexander Stafford: [\[88421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) offshore wind, (b) onshore wind and (c) solar sites which could bid into Contract for Difference Auction Round 4.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Government considers a range of matters when setting the parameters for Contracts for Difference auctions, including the anticipated pipeline of eligible projects. We will publish allocation round parameters in advance of the next auction in 2021, when assessments of the potential volume of participants can be informed by the most current information on project pipelines.

■ Renewable Energy: Job Creation

Simon Fell: [\[87666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs in (a) onshore wind, (b) solar and (c) offshore wind which could be created in the 2019 Parliament as a result of the Contract for Difference Auction Round 4.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The low carbon economy is a success story, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it will continue to grow as we deliver net zero. The Government has not estimated the number of jobs that could be directly created as a result of the Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 4. Auction outcomes are dependent on many factors including the auction parameters, which are yet to be set. However, we work closely with industry to maximise the opportunities for UK suppliers from projects with approved Supply Chain Plans.

■ Shipping: Investment**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[86565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support private investment in the UK maritime industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department is working to make the UK the best place in the world for all businesses to thrive and grow.

The UK maritime sector has strategic importance for our economy and we encourage private investment into the sector. We have recently supported the £33 million investment in Artemis in Belfast to develop an autonomous water taxi.

The maritime sector is also benefitting from the Government's Covid-19 support, which includes access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Covid-19 Business Interruption Loans.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Redundancy**Rachael Maskell:**[\[88901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many people have been made redundant from voluntary and community organisations in each week since January 2020 for organisations where there were (a) more and (b) less than 20 redundancies.

Paul Scully:

The Government does not hold this information:

- Employers are required to report their intention to make over 20 redundancies at any individual establishment to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Proposed redundancies do not always become actual redundancies, and may be prevented through restructuring or sale of the company.
- The Government's Redundancy Payments Service pays redundant employees when the employer has either demonstrated financial difficulties or is insolvent. Therefore, not all redundancies made are recorded.
- The Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes used to categorise business activities is not required for the Redundancy Payments Service. Only 9% of

employers on their records have a logged SIC. Therefore, they cannot identify redundancies within the voluntary or community organisation SIC.

■ Redundancy

Rachael Maskell: [88899]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people have lost their job in each month in the last 15 years.

Julia Lopez:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ88899 [PQ88899.pdf]

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon: [89698]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church of England is taking to meet the needs of parishioners during the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Selous:

At parish, diocesan and national level, the Church of England has been producing resources and delivering support to meet the spiritual and practical needs of those in its parishes throughout the covid-19 outbreak. This has included live and pre-recorded services, both local and national, pastoral support, children and youth work, bereavement care, support for foodbanks and other local charitable activities too numerous to list here, often assisted with resources provided centrally or at a diocesan level. The Daily Hope phoneline has also offered hope and prayerful support to those who are without access to online resources. Church schools have also been involved in supporting pupils and families with home learning during lockdown, as well as continuing to host children of key workers and vulnerable children on site. There is a dedicated coronavirus section of the Church of England website which provides further information:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches> , and examples of the work that churches have undertaken during the outbreak can also be seen here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/stories-and-features>

DEFENCE**■ Côte d'Ivoire: Demonstrations****Stephen Morgan:**[\[86746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to help reduce violence committed against civilians in the Ivory Coast amid clashes between Government forces and people protesting against President Alassane Ouattara's decision to run for a third term.

James Heappey:

The UK Government has a strong partnership with Côte d'Ivoire. Stability and inclusive economic growth are shared priorities, with a view to consolidating peace after a decade of crisis and uncertainty. We take every opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to peaceful, free and credible elections, in line with international law, and encourage all parties to work towards this goal. We have done so directly with government and opposition political parties in Côte d'Ivoire.

The elections are the responsibility of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, all political parties, and the Ivoirian people. We urge all parties to participate responsibly, engage fully in the process and avoid the use of inflammatory language. UK Defence is working closely with partners across Government and our Embassy in Abidjan in supporting security forces' training which focuses on ensuring public security during the election period is maintained, including respect for human rights.

■ Defence: Procurement**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[88827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has signed defence programme contracts with suppliers which purport to prohibit either (a) the prime contractor or (b) subcontractors from speaking to hon Members on matters related to the defence programme.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 September 2020 to Questions 84656 and 84975.

Attachments:

1. 84656 - Non Disclosure Agreements [Hansard Extract (1).docx]

■ Inappropriate Behaviours in the Armed Forces Review**Mrs Sharon Hodgson:**[\[88829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 85970 on Inappropriate Behaviours in the Armed Forces Review, what the terms of reference are for Danuta Gray's one year on review of the Wigston report.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:[\[88830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to question 85970 on Inappropriate Behaviours in the Armed Forces Review, whether he has plans in place for the consultation of (a) charities, (b) Community Interest Companies and (c) other stakeholders for Danuta Gray's one year on review of the Wigston report.

Johnny Mercer:

Danuta Gray began her Review on 15 July 2020 and the terms of reference are attached.

The Review seeks to assess progress made against the Wigston recommendations over the past year. Tackling unacceptable behaviour requires a culture change, therefore Ms Gray's Review has engaged with personnel at all ranks and grades, with Non-Executive Directors and private sector experts; it has also been informed by a range of studies and feedback. Culture change is a long-term process and the Wigston Review estimated it would take five to ten years to make a measurable difference; it is too early to consult on a wider basis, but future work is likely to include liaison with Service charities.

■ Land: Sales**Christian Matheson:**[\[88886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the sale of land which was the site of his Departments former fuel store depot at Chorlton by Backford, Chester, is subject to the Crichell Down rules.

Jeremy Quin:

In January 2019, it was declared that land at Backford Depot at Chorlton by Backford in Chester was surplus to Ministry of Defence requirements and was to be sold by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

In accordance with Treasury Guidelines, any disposal action commences with an investigation of whether the Crichel Down Rules (CDR) apply, this was undertaken for the Backford site and the CDR were found to apply. Potential Former Owners were asked to identify themselves following an advertisement in January 2019. The Department is currently in negotiations with a Former Owner and the CDR process is ongoing.

■ Qatar: Military Aid**Martin Docherty-Hughes:**[\[86677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) Royal Air Force personnel and 9b) Qatari Emiri Air Force personnel have been assigned to 12 Squadron RAF.

James Heapey:

There are currently 163 RAF personnel assigned to 12 Squadron. I am withholding information on the number of Qatari Emiri Air Force personnel assigned to 12 Squadron as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice relations between the

United Kingdom and another State. An initial cadre of Qatari Emiri Air Force personnel is currently on the Squadron; this will gradually increase as further personnel graduate from training.

Martin Docherty-Hughes:

[\[86678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much 12 Squadron RAF has cost the public purse in each year since 2018; and how much of those costs have been borne by the (a) Qatar Emiri Air Force and (b) Government of Qatar.

James Heappey:

12 Squadron has formed in three stages: Stand Up of the Squadron (July 2018), commencement of RAF flying operations (2019) and commencement of flying operations with Qatar Emiri Air Force (2020).

To date 12 Squadron costs from the RAF Operating budget have been £1.951 million in Financial Year (FY) 2018-2019, £9.959 million in FY 2019-2020 and £5.423 million in FY 2020-21 to end August 2020. I am withholding detailed information on the costs the Qatari Emiri Air Force have borne for 12 Squadron operations as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and another State. However, I can confirm as part of the wider £6 billion Export Sale of Typhoon to Qatar, the Government of Qatar has funded 50% of the Squadron operating costs since the point at which QEAF pilots started flying on the Joint Squadron.

■ UK Border Force: Military Aid

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, prior to his Department accepting the Home Office's request for military assistance in the English Channel, what assessment his Department conducted of the compatibility of that request with his Department's strategic objectives.

James Heappey:

Responsibility for security and integrity of the UK's borders resides with the Home Office and Border Force. Support provided to other Government departments is done so against set principles that guide the provision of Defence support. Support to the Civil Authorities in this instance was provided in support of wider Defence activities.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the operational effectiveness of his Department's intervention in the English Channel; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

Defence is providing assistance as a part of a Home Office-led operation, therefore the ultimate assessment of its effectiveness will lie with them as the lead department. The Ministry of Defence and the Home Office will work together to ensure that all

requests for Defence support continue to be delivered according to the principles of Military Aid to the Civil Authorities.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Antenatal Care and Children's Play: Facilities

Damien Moore:

[\[82345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support the Government plans to provide for (a) soft play centres and (b) maternal classes when those facilities reopen after the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active and the Government has been committed to reopening facilities as soon as it is safe to do so. On 13 August, the Government announced that indoor play and indoor soft play venues could open from 15 August. Indoor play and indoor soft play venues have been able to access the unprecedented financial support package that the Government has provided businesses across the economy during the pandemic.

Antenatal classes are provided by the NHS. Like all areas of NHS care, maternity services will be affected by the pandemic, but antenatal contact and new baby visits should continue. Maternity units are working to ensure services are provided in a way that is safe, supported by greater use of digital and remote technologies.

Video consultation capability by NHS providers has rapidly been scaled up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attend Anywhere is a web-based video consultation platform intended for use on tablets, smartphones, laptops or PC's with a webcam and is funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement for all maternity providers to use.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Tourism

Rachael Maskell:

[\[87586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the tourism sector on extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the significant impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector. We continue to monitor the situation and the Government has put in place an unprecedented economic package to support the sector, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Through the Cultural Renewal Taskforce and the Visitor Economy Working Group, we continue to engage with stakeholders from the tourism sector on the economic support packages available, and to assess how we can most effectively support tourism's recovery on an ongoing basis.

■ Gambling: Advertising

Carolyn Harris: [86702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what sanctions are in place for gambling operators that breach age-restricted advertising rules.

Carolyn Harris: [86703]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning gambling advertising.

Nigel Huddleston:

Gambling companies that advertise to British consumers must abide by strict rules on the content and placement of ads, including that they must never be targeted at children or vulnerable people. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's regulator for advertising and where it finds an ad to be in breach of its codes it will require the ad be amended or removed. If an advertiser fails to act on this warning, the ASA has a range of sanctions it can take, including Ad Alerts to the media, withdrawal of trading privileges, and mandatory pre-vetting. The ASA's authority is underpinned in regulation of broadcast advertising by a statutory relationship with Ofcom and the Gambling Commission's licence conditions and codes of practice require operators to comply with the advertising codes for all forms of gambling advertising. Serious and repeated breaches of the codes may lead to an operator being referred by the ASA to the Gambling Commission, which has the power to suspend or revoke licences and issue financial penalties.

The Government assessed the evidence on advertising in its Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures, the full response to which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-changes-to-gaming-machines-and-social-responsibility-measures>. We continue to keep emerging evidence under review.

■ Gambling: Coronavirus

Carolyn Harris: [86700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the (a) number of (i) men and (ii) women gambling and (b) rates of problematic gambling during the covid-19 outbreak; and whether he has made an assessment of the effect of covid-19 lockdown on the propensity of people already gambling to try new products.

Carolyn Harris: [86701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the rates of play on different gambling products during the covid-19 outbreak.

Carolyn Harris:

[88916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the amount of (a) money and (b) time spent by people on gambling by category of gambling type during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Gambling Commission has monitored gambling behaviours during the Covid-19 period by collecting data from operators and through regular surveys. Information from both of these sources has been published on the Commission's website and is available here: <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/news/2020/Data-shows-the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-gambling-behaviour-in-May-2020.aspx>

Survey data collected during April, May and June this year shows that 35% of men and 27% of women had gambled in the past four weeks. Amongst those past-four-week gamblers, 31% tried a new product, with the most common being National Lottery draws (18%). Rates of participation for different forms of gambling are also given, showing that, for example, 24% of people played National Lottery draws and 2% played online slots or instant win games during that time.

In addition, respondents were asked whether they had spent more time or money on any gambling activities in the past four weeks than they had previously. 73% of respondents had not spent more time or money, with National Lottery draws the most popular activities amongst those who had increased either time (8%) or money (14%) spent.

The Gambling Commission conducts a quarterly telephone survey of gambling behaviours which collects data about problem gambling prevalence. The most recent wave of that survey was carried out in June 2020, and the next is due to take place in September. As this quarterly data is aggregated to provide annual figures, and problem gambling is measured using questions which ask about past year experiences and behaviours, the survey has not yet provided an indication of the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on problem gambling rates. However, any significant shifts are likely to be reflected in the next set of data which is due to be published in October. Figures for the year to June can be found at <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/Statistics-and-research/Levels-of-participation-and-problem-gambling/Research-library.aspx>

■ **Internet: Safety**

Chi Onwurah:

[88316]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions Ofcom has had with (a) social media companies and (b) citizen and consumer groups on online harms in 2020.

Caroline Dinéage:

Ofcom has responsibility for the video sharing platform (VSP) regime which will come into force by this Autumn. Ofcom is working constructively alongside industry to

develop the foundations both for this regime and any future online regulation. Through its engagement with stakeholders, Ofcom will ensure its guidance for the VSP regime is informed by robust evidence, best practice and an understanding of the current capabilities of different services.

Ofcom also has regular ongoing engagement with a wide variety of online-related bodies in the delivery of its media literacy duties including through the Making Sense of Media (MSOM) programme, which brings together organisations and individuals with expertise in media literacy with a shared goal of improving the online skills, knowledge and understanding of UK adults and children.

In February 2020, the Government published the initial consultation response to the Online Harms White Paper and announced that it was minded to appoint Ofcom as the online harms regulator. Further details will be included in the full government response to the consultation, which we will publish later this year.

■ **National Lottery**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[88917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will raise the age limit on the National Lottery to 18.

Nigel Huddleston:

I refer the Honourable Member to my answer of 3 August 2020 to Question 75396.

■ **Pornography: Internet**

Fiona Bruce:

[\[88858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75251 on pornography, what plans he has to publish the Government's analysis of pornography sites.

Caroline Dinenege:

Details of how the online harms legislation will apply to pornography sites, will be published later this year in the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

■ **Telecommunications: Huawei**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[86649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing quarterly reports to Parliament on the progress on removing Huawei from 5G and other telecommunications networks.

Matt Warman:

Forthcoming legislation on telecommunications security will ensure that there are appropriate reporting, compliance and enforcement arrangements in place in relation to the management and oversight of directions in relation to high risk vendors.

Subject to the passage of the forthcoming legislation, the Secretary of State will have the ability to make directions relating to high risk vendors in the UK 5G network, working alongside Ofcom, who may be asked to provide the Secretary of State with factual reports on operators' use of high risk vendor products. The Secretary of State may choose to publish any reports, or a summary of such reports. The Secretary of State would also be responsible for taking forward enforcement action where necessary to ensure directions are adhered to.

■ Tourism

Joy Morrissey:

[\[88399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support the tourism sector as it moves from the summer season into autumn.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the significant impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector. We continue to monitor the situation and are taking steps to support the sector as it moves to the autumn season.

The Government has implemented a series of measures that will assist tourism business over the coming months, such as the cut to VAT which will last into January and business rates relief for hospitality, retail and leisure businesses which will last until the end of March.

We are working with VisitBritain on an Autumn and Winter campaign, 'Escape the Everyday', which will help extend the tourism season.

The Government is also encouraging local planning authorities to exercise their discretion in relation to planning conditions for caravan, campsites and holiday parks, in order to help these businesses extend their open season.

And through the Cultural Renewal Taskforce and the Visitor Economy Working Group, we are continuing to engage with stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support tourism's recovery across the UK.

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[88897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to help ensure the safety of adults with additional needs (a) travelling to and (b) taking part in activities at adult education centres during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

It is our priority to make sure that all students return to education this September as this is the best place for their education, development and wellbeing. Colleges are making every effort to ensure students and staff are as safe as possible for face to face teaching and are confident they will achieve this.

The department has published guidance which sets out how further education colleges can reopen safely for all learners, including those that are older or vulnerable. The guidance has been developed in close consultation with sector and medical experts from Public Health England. It sets out in detail the steps colleges should take to protect their staff and learners with a requirement to undertake full health and safety COVID-19 risk assessments and implement the September reopening protective measures. The full guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/what-fe-colleges-and-providers-will-need-to-do-from-the-start-of-the-2020-autumn-term>.

In many areas, students make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses, to travel to education. Students and staff using public transport should refer to the Department for Transport's safer travel guidance for passengers which can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>.

Further education providers are being advised to work with their local authority to consider the transport needs of students with special educational needs and disabilities and those with an education, health and care plan and to identify when it might be necessary to take steps to manage demand on public transport or to arrange additional transport. Local transport authorities have received additional funding for school and college dedicated transport to support students in their region return to further education providers. More information regarding this funding is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-funding-package-for-school-transport>.

The 16-19 bursary fund offers financial support for students who need additional support in a range of areas including accessing digital learning, and other forms of support. For adults we are introducing changes to the Adult Education Budget funding rules for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This is to enable providers to use learner support funds to purchase IT devices for students aged 19 plus and to help them meet students' IT connectivity costs, where these costs are a barrier to accessing or continuing in their training.

■ Apprentices: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[87484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that levels of intakes for apprenticeships nationally does not decline due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

Apprenticeships will be more important than ever in helping businesses to recruit the right people and develop the skills they need to recover and grow following the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have introduced a range of flexibilities to support apprentices and employers to continue with and complete their apprenticeships. These include encouraging the

remote delivery of training, introducing flexibilities to end-point assessments, and allowing furloughed apprentices to continue their apprenticeships and end-point assessments.

We recognise that employers face increased challenges with hiring new apprentices. The government's 'Plan for Jobs' will help to kickstart the nation's economic recovery by offering employers payments for recruiting new apprentices. Businesses will be able to claim £1,500 for every apprentice they hire as a new employee from 1 August 2020 until 31 January 2021, rising to £2,000 if they hire a new apprentice under the age of 25.

In addition, to support smaller employers, we are ensuring sufficient funding is available for those wanting to take on an apprentice this year

■ Education: Coronavirus

Mary Kelly Foy:

[84351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance has been issued to education providers in the event that a student's parents refuse to have them tested for covid-19 when requested to do so.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has been clear that all pupils, in all year groups, should return to school or college full-time from the beginning of the autumn term and on 2 July we published guidance to help schools and colleges prepare for this. The guidance can be viewed her: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>.

All schools and colleges will be provided with a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff or students who have developed symptoms at school or college, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested.

We have also issued guidance explaining what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term. This guidance explains that it is important for parents to engage with the NHS Test and Trace process and can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>.

In the majority of cases, schools and parents will be in agreement that a child with symptoms should not attend school, given the potential risk to others. In the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, schools can take the decision to refuse the child if in their reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect their pupils and staff from possible infection COVID-19. Any such decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and the current public health advice.

Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for COVID-19 here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/>.

■ GCE A-level: Assessments

Theresa Villiers:

[83687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that schools support students who were unable to take A-levels in summer 2020 and wish to take those exams in autumn 2020 by (a) offering completion of those A-level syllabuses, (b) offering revision classes and (c) providing access to (i) libraries, (ii) text books, (iii) online and (iv) other resources.

Nick Gibb:

In most cases, students will have received grades in the summer which will enable them to move onto their next step. Students who were unable to receive grades or are not happy with their grades are able to take exams in the autumn if they choose. If a student wants to sit an exam, we expect the school or college that entered them in the summer to enter them in autumn. Schools are able to provide additional support to students sitting their exams in the autumn if they have capacity to do so. The Department is offering an Exam Support Service to help all schools and colleges run the autumn series. Schools and colleges will be able to book fully funded space for the exams if they need it to avoid disruption to teaching. They will also be able to claim funding for autumn exam fees and invigilation costs if these exceed the savings they have made in the summer.

■ Nurseries: Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund

Ian Lavery:

[86053]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether maintained nurseries are able to access Catch Up Grant funding.

Vicky Ford:

We are investing £1 billion in the COVID catch up fund. £650 million will be shared across state primary and secondary schools to support all pupils over the 2020-21 academic year and a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the same period. This includes £9 million to expand the Nuffield Early Language Intervention to support reception-aged children with poor language skills.

This funding is being focused on primary and secondary schools so they can help pupils catch up on time spent out of school. Early education is also vital, and we have prioritised getting the youngest children back into their childcare settings as quickly as possible. They have been able to return to nurseries and childminders since 1 June, so they have missed out on less education.

We will continue to support children's early language and literacy skills through the Hungry Little Minds campaign.

Furthermore, the sector has benefitted from continued early years entitlement funding during the COVID-19 outbreak, on which we are planning to spend over £3.6 billion in 2020-21. On 20 July, we announced our commitment to continue funding local authorities for childcare this autumn term at the same levels as seen prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of whether fewer children are attending. If providers are open but caring for fewer children as a result of low demand, either from parents or due to public health reasons, they can continue to be funded for the autumn term at broadly the levels that they would have expected to see had there been no COVID-19 outbreak.

For maintained nursery schools, we also recently announced that they will continue to receive supplementary funding for the whole the 2020-21 academic year.

■ Nurseries: Finance

Tulip Siddiq:

[88365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the financial stability of the nursery sector of the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Vicky Ford:

The early years sector has benefitted from continued entitlement funding during the COVID-19 outbreak, on which we are planning to spend over £3.6 billion in 2020-21. On 20 July, we announced our commitment to continue funding local authorities for childcare this autumn term, at the same levels as seen prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of whether fewer children are attending. If providers are open but caring for fewer children as a result of low demand, either from parents or due to public health reasons, they can continue to be funded for the autumn term at broadly the levels that they would have expected to see had there been no COVID-19 outbreak.

Early years providers have also been able to access a comprehensive package of business support, including a business rates holiday, a small business grant of £10,000, business loans and access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. More details are available at:

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

To provide additional support to businesses to retain employees as demand grows, we are introducing the Job Retention Bonus after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends on 31 October 2020.

The Job Retention Bonus is a one-off payment of £1,000 to employers for each employee who was ever furloughed, has been continuously employed until 31 January 2021 and is still employed by the same employer as of 31 January 2021.

Employees must have been continuously employed, earn an average of more than £520 per month in November, December and January and have been furloughed and

successfully claimed for under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at any point to be eligible.

Further details about the Job Retention Bonus are available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/job-retention-bonus>.

■ Pupil Premium: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[88363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department will bear additional costs associated with increases in the number of children eligible for the pupil premium due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[88364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for the number of pupils eligible for (a) free school meals and (b) the pupil premium of the Office for Budget Responsibility's projection for unemployment over the next 12 months.

Vicky Ford:

We are monitoring eligibility for free school meals and the pupil premium as part of the normal policy-making process. We will collect definitive information on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals at the October school census.

Allocations for pupil premium for 2020-21 were published in June, and the first quarterly instalments were paid out in June and July. The total value of pupil premium allocations in 2020-21 is estimated at £2.4 billion. Announcements on pupil premium funding for 2021-22 will follow later in the year, in line with the usual timetable.

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has also announced a further £1 billion of funding to support children and young people. This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020-21 academic year to ensure that schools have the support that they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time, available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools.

We will also spend up to £350 million on the National Tutoring Programme to provide targeted support for children and young people who been hardest hit from disruption to their education. Through the Tuition Partners strand, schools in all regions will be eligible to access heavily subsidised tuition from an approved list of tuition partners. Through our Academic Mentors strand, our most disadvantaged schools can apply for support to employ in-house Academic Mentor to provide small group and 1:1 tuition to their pupils.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq: [\[88920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that pupils who are eligible for free school meals are still able to receive that support if they are required to self isolate at home as a result of covid-19.

Vicky Ford:

School kitchens have reopened and normal free school meal provision has resumed for the autumn term. Schools should provide meal options for all pupils who are in school. Meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and all pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria. We expect catering providers to support pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are unable to attend school because they are self-isolating due to COVID-19 by providing food parcels should the need arise.

Our latest guidance for on providing school meals during the COVID-19 outbreak is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

■ Pupils: Genetics**Greg Smith:****[87686]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what advice his Department gives to schools to ensure that pupils with (a) neurofibromatosis 1 and (b) other genetic conditions receive adequate and effective support.

Vicky Ford:

Our ambition is for every child, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life.

The statutory guidance to support pupils at school with medical conditions are designed to help schools ensure that they are meeting their legal responsibilities by taking reasonable action to support children with medical conditions and to give parents confidence that the right support will be put in place. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

The guidance covers a range of areas including the preparation and implementation of school policies for supporting pupils with medical conditions, the use of individual healthcare plans, staff training, medicines administration, roles and responsibilities, consulting with parents and collaborative working with healthcare professionals. It was developed based on good practice in schools.

We will continue to work with organisations such as the Health Conditions in Schools Alliance to help raise further awareness of the duty on schools. Collaborative working between local authorities, health bodies, schools and school governing bodies is vital to ensure that pupils with medical needs are appropriately supported in school.

■ Schools: Uniforms**Jonathan Gullis:****[82550]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) quality, (b) sustainability and (c) cost considerations are prioritised in school uniform policy.

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[82551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the importance of maintaining school autonomy when developing policy on school uniform.

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[82552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the importance of ensuring school uniform retailers maintain year-round availability of uniform to pupils.

Nick Gibb:

It is for the governing body of a school (or in the case of academies, the academy trust) to decide whether there should be a school uniform policy and what it should be.

To support them to do this, the Department has issued best practice guidance, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>. This makes clear that high priority must be given to cost considerations.

Governing bodies should be able to demonstrate that they have obtained the best value for money from suppliers. Governing bodies should also consider the available supply sources and year round availability of the proposed uniform.

The Government supports the recently introduced Private Members' Bill to 'Make provision for guidance about the cost aspects of school uniform policies', which will place a duty on the Secretary of State to issue statutory guidance pertaining to cost aspects of school uniform policies.

■ Sex and Relationship Education: Primary Education

Sir John Hayes:

[\[78513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the role played by LGBT+ advocacy groups in the delivery of sex education in primary schools.

Nick Gibb:

The Department wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe and to equip them for adult life. That is why Relationships Education has been made compulsory for primary school pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) has been made compulsory for secondary school pupils, and Health Education compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools.

The statutory duty to implement the new subjects from September 2020 has come into force. However, considering the current circumstances faced by schools, the Department is reassuring schools that they have flexibility over when they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching.

The content on Relationships Education for primary school pupils focuses on supporting children to have healthy relationships with their family and healthy friendships. It does not include content on sex education. If a primary school chooses to teach sex education, they will be required to publish a policy on this. Head

teachers will automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum.

All pupils should receive teaching on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) content during their school years. Secondary schools should include LGBT content in their teaching. Primary schools can, when teaching about different types of families, include families with same-sex parents.

The statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education sets out clear advice on choosing resources. The guidance states that schools should assess each resource they intend to use to ensure that it is appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils and sensitive to their needs. Schools should also ensure that, when they consult parents, they provide examples of the resources they plan to use. Schools should also ensure that teaching delivered by external agencies or visitors fits with their planned programme and their published policy. It is important that schools discuss the detail of how the visitor will deliver their sessions and ensure that the content is age-appropriate and accessible for the pupils. Schools should ask to see the materials that external agencies or visitors will use as well as a lesson plan in advance, so that they can ensure it meets the full range of pupils' needs (for example, special educational needs). The statutory guidance can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

In covering the content of the new subjects, the guidance also sets out schools' duty to comply with relevant requirements of the Equality Act (2010), including the Public Sector Equality Duty. Schools should also be aware of their duties regarding impartiality and balanced treatment of political issues in the classroom to ensure content is handled in an appropriate way.

■ Students: Assessments

Mr Mark Harper:

[81649]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that students taking exams in October 2020 receive an adequate level of tuition to help compensate for the disruptions to their education caused by the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

In most cases, students will have received grades in the summer which will enable them to move onto their next step. Students who were unable to receive grades or are not happy with their grades are able to take exams in the autumn if they choose. If a student wants to sit an exam, we expect the school or college that entered them in the summer to enter them in autumn. Schools are able to provide additional support to students sitting their exams in the autumn if they have capacity to do so. The Department is offering an Exam Support Service to help all schools and colleges run the autumn series. Schools and colleges will be able to book fully funded space for the exams if they need it to avoid disruption to teaching. They will also be able to

claim funding for autumn exam fees and invigilation costs if these exceed the savings they have made in the summer.

■ **Students: Employment and Higher Education**

Afzal Khan:

[\[83926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) private candidates and (b) home-schooled students do not miss out on a place at college or university, or employment, as a result of not having a centre assessment grade.

Afzal Khan:

[\[83927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) private candidates and (b) home schooled students who are missing out on a place at college or university, or employment, as a result of not having a centre assessment grade.

Nick Gibb:

Where schools and colleges had accepted entries from external candidates (students who they have not taught themselves because they have been home educated or studying independently), those students should have been included in the process of producing centre assessment grades (CAGs), where the head teacher or principal was confident that they and their staff had seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement.

Ofqual and the exam boards explored the options for those students who did not have an existing relationship with an exam centre and who needed results this summer for progression purposes. The Joint Council for Qualifications published guidance for exam centres on accepting private candidates which set out the options that would be available. Ofqual asked organisations that represent higher and further education earlier in the year to consider the steps that they could take when making admissions decisions this summer for any external candidates who do not receive a grade. Ofqual informed the Department that they believed that institutions would consider a range of other evidence and information for these students to allow them to progress wherever possible. The Government asked universities to be as flexible as possible, and we will continue to make every effort to minimise the impact of the pandemic on young people's education and progression.

Students who were unable to receive a grade will need to sit exams, either in the autumn exam series or in summer 2021. Exams will be available in all GCSE, AS and A level subjects in the autumn. We have made clear that we expect schools and colleges that had accepted entries from private candidates in the summer to enter them into exams in the autumn where the students wish to sit an exam, and we have put in place arrangements to ensure that there are no financial barriers to them doing that.

■ Teachers: Documents**Fleur Anderson:****[86771]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will highlight changes in guidance to schools to ensure that teachers are easily able to find small changes in long documents.

Nick Gibb:

The response to COVID-19 is a fast-moving situation and, as it has evolved, guidance for schools has been needed on a range of issues. The Department have continued to update our guidance in response to feedback from school leaders and stakeholders, and to ensure that it reflects the most up-to-date medical and scientific information to make sure that teachers, parents and young people are as well-informed as possible in the current rapidly changing circumstances.

The Department published guidance for schools on full opening on 2 July, to support schools to prepare for the autumn term. We have kept this under review and updated it when needed. The guidance is available at:

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

Guidance from the Department lists any changes at the start of all documents to enable school staff and others to see what has been updated. The Department have also made efforts to reduce the number of different guidance documents on our website so that leaders can, as far as possible, access all the information they need in fewer places.

■ Universities: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:****[86100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional steps he is taking to ensure that universities have the resources they need to respond to the covid-19 outbreak.

Michelle Donelan:

We are working closely with the higher education sector to provide both practical and financial support through the COVID-19 outbreak. On 10 September, we published updated guidance to the higher education sector on reopening buildings and campuses, which is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

This updated guidance provides further advice on, among other topics, reopening university buildings, face coverings and social contacts, student accommodation, local outbreaks including student movement, and on NHS test and trace.

Furthermore, we announced a higher education support package in early May. HM Treasury confirmed higher education providers are eligible to apply for government business support schemes, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced its research stabilisation package on 27 June.

From the autumn, the government will provide a package of grants and no-interest or low-interest loans to cover up to 80% of a university's income losses from international students for the academic year 2020-21, up to the value of their non-publicly funded research activity.

On 16 July, we also announced further information about the higher education restructuring regime. This may be deployed as a last resort, if a decision has been made to support a provider in England, when other steps to preserve a provider's viability and mitigate the risks of financial failure have not proved sufficient.

We have also announced that, subject to parliamentary approval, we will completely remove temporary student number controls to help ensure that there are no additional barriers to students being able to progress to higher education.

We have lifted caps on domestic medicine and dentistry courses for 2020-21 and supported providers to offer places to as many students who have met the grades for their current offer as they have capacity for, and where there are clinical placements available, through additional grant funding to support the costs of this provision.

We are providing additional teaching grant funding to increase capacity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and other high-cost subjects which are vital to the country's social needs and economy. The Office for Students (OfS) will consult the sector on the details of how the allocations are made.

Providers will also be eligible to bid for a share of up to £10 million of funding to support capital expenditure. This funding will be used to support the infrastructure required to accommodate additional students recruited as a result of the changes to policy on A level grades. The fund will be administered by the OfS, and providers will be eligible to bid for projects that support expansion in 2020-21.

We will continue to monitor the situation and consider the effects that deferrals will have on future years. Funding decisions for future years will be taken at the Spending Review.

Lastly, and most importantly, we are supporting providers to protect students' mental health and wellbeing. This is a priority and I wrote to all higher education providers asking them to ensure they continue to support students. We have clarified that providers can use funding worth £256 million for the academic year 2020-21, starting from August, towards student hardship funds and mental health support.

Furthermore, the OfS has provided up to £3 million to fund the Student Space platform to bridge gaps in mental health support for students. Student Space is a collaborative mental health resource to support students at English and Welsh universities through the unique circumstances created by the COVID-19 outbreak.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Falcons: Exports**

Allan Dorans: [\[87660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the APHA Cites applications currently processed in Bristol, what progress he has made on replacing the paper-based application process for a licence to export live falcons with an online process; and what the timescale is for the completion of that process.

Victoria Prentis:

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) are continuing to develop an electronic permitting (e-permitting) system through which traders and individuals would be able to apply for CITES permits and certificates online. The system would be accessible for all CITES listed specimens including live falcons.

Timelines for progressing this work are currently subject to further discussion however we remain committed to delivering an efficient and modern domestic regime.

■ Flood Control: Yorkshire and the Humber

Dan Jarvis: **[R]** [\[88870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of 10 September 2020, Official Report, column 759, when he plans to hold the Yorkshire flood summit.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises the impact that flooding has had on individuals and local communities and sympathises with all those affected. I have been in contact with Hon. Members from the South Yorkshire area on the issue of a round table.

Prior to lockdown, Defra officials were working to set this up. However, the coronavirus pandemic has caused delays. Officials continue to work on the logistics for holding a meeting in response to the November 2019 flooding and I expect to be able to confirm a date very soon.

■ Recycling: Coronavirus

Dr Luke Evans: [\[86768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid 19 outbreak on recycling rates in (a) the UK and (b) Leicestershire.

Rebecca Pow:

Kerbside residual and recycling collections are a high priority for the Government. There has not yet been a formal assessment made of the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak on recycling rates in the UK or in Leicestershire. Publication of local

authority waste data for England by Defra is on an annual basis and figures covering the period April 2020 to March 2021 are due to be published in November 2021.

However, a survey of local authorities by the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Transport and Planning indicates that most local authorities were able to maintain recycling collections to a near normal level. Both recycling and residual waste from households were reported by many authorities to be significantly higher than normal, but the effect of COVID-19 on recycling rates at this time is unknown.

www.adeptnet.org.uk/covid-19-waste-survey-results

At the start of lockdown in March, Defra officials worked with local authorities to help them continue their waste collections, including collections of recycling. We published guidance to help local authorities prioritise waste collection services and to keep their household waste and recycling centres open while observing social distancing guidance.

■ **Sewage: Waste Disposal**

James Wild:

[86769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether there is a threshold of the annual number of discharges by combined sewer outflows above which the Environment Agency is required to investigate.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency puts forward storm overflows that spill greater than a given threshold for investigation by water companies through the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP).

The spill thresholds currently applied are shown in the table below and depend on the number of years of Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) data available. As more data becomes available a tighter threshold of spills per year is adopted.

In the period 2020-2025, 727 storm overflows are currently being investigated. As the provision of storm overflow monitoring data increases more overflows are being identified as crossing the spill thresholds and will be put forward for the WINEP. If the investigation shows that it is cost-beneficial to reduce spills, a scheme would be secured through the WINEP.

The Environment Agency also investigates storm overflows based on evidence of environmental impact and/or non-compliance with permit conditions.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Bangladesh: Rohingya**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[86621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received representations on the resumption of the Government of

Bangladesh pilot of the Myanmar curriculum in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps; and whether steps towards the resumption of that curriculum have been agreed.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The Government of Bangladesh agreed earlier this year to ensure Rohingya children have access to the Myanmar curriculum. Since then the COVID-19 crisis has forced the closure of all learning centres in the camps. Education partners have tried to ensure continuity of learning; for example, by providing caregivers with learning materials. We hope learning centres will re-open soon, with measures in place to ensure the safety of pupils and teachers. This includes piloting the Myanmar curriculum. The Foreign Secretary has stressed the importance of this in his communication with the Government of Bangladesh. FCDO officials regularly engage on education for Rohingya refugees, including through the Myanmar curriculum, with stakeholders in Cox's Bazar, Dhaka and London.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[86622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Bangladesh on a timetable for the reinstatement of internet services for Rohingya refugees.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has consistently engaged with the Government of Bangladesh on the importance of restoring internet services in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps since restrictions were introduced in September 2019. The Foreign Secretary raised this in a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in July. The Minister for South Asia, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, has discussed the issue several times with the Bangladesh High Commissioner in London. The British High Commissioner in Dhaka has also spoken with the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Adviser and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On Friday 28 August, we were pleased to see internet services restored in the camps.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[86616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of persecution of religious minorities within the covid-19 pandemic response in (a) Nigeria, (b) India, (c) Bangladesh, (d) Somalia, (e) China, (f) Myanmar, (g) the Gulf region and (h) other countries.

Nigel Adams:

We are continuing to assess the impact of COVID-19 on minority religious and belief communities around the world. We are deeply concerned by incidents of hate speech targeting minority religious and belief groups, including the rise in conspiracy theories that certain faiths or beliefs are to blame for coronavirus. Such incidents are unacceptable, and the UK will continue to refute these divisive and harmful claims. We are also concerned by reports that some minority communities have been denied access to aid and information. As part of our ongoing work to promote Freedom of

Religion or Belief for all, we have issued statements calling for states to ensure that any restrictions to the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief are necessary, proportionate and time-limited to protect public health. The Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, also urged states to take steps to mitigate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society, including religious and belief minorities, during the UK's closing statement at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

■ Côte d'Ivoire: Politics and Government

Neil Coyle:

[\[84699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the political and security situation in the Ivory Coast.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government has a strong partnership with Côte d'Ivoire. Stability and inclusive economic growth are shared priorities, with a view to consolidating peace after a decade of crisis and uncertainty.

The upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections are the responsibility of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, all political parties, and the Ivoirian people. Peaceful, free and credible elections, in line with international law, are an opportunity to build long term peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. We encourage all parties to work towards this goal.

We are concerned about reports of protests and violence, which resulted in a dozen deaths in August. We urge all parties to participate responsibly, engage fully in the process, avoid the use of inflammatory language, and denounce violence and hate speech. To support these aims, alongside members of the international community, our Embassy in Abidjan is working closely with the United Nations Development Programme to support fair and transparent elections. This includes £300,000 of funding to support dialogue and prevention management of the risks of electoral violence. This includes increasing the number of women mediators involved in election management and organising meetings between security forces, civil society and communities. We are also supporting the training of security forces, which is focused on ensuring that public security during the election period is maintained and that human rights are respected. We are following developments closely. We expect elections to be conducted transparently and that due process be followed before and during the polls.

■ Ethiopia: Demonstrations

Patrick Grady:

[\[86686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Ethiopian counterpart on the recent protests in that country.

Patrick Grady:

[\[86687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help reduce violence committed against civilians and protesters in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The UK is concerned by reports of violence and displacement of people in a number of regions in Ethiopia. I raised this with the Government of Ethiopia when visiting Addis Ababa at the end of July. I raised the importance of open and transparent investigations into ongoing incidents of violence. The UK supports the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to strengthen accountability and has been encouraged by their efforts to open the political space - in particular the release of thousands of political prisoners and the reform of legislation which constrained civil and political rights. We are committed to supporting civil society organisations in Ethiopia so that they can play an increasing role in monitoring human rights. We shall continue to monitor the situation and to raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with the Government of Ethiopia and regional leaders.

■ Ethiopia: Human Rights

Patrick Grady:

[\[86688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help reduce human rights violations against the Oromo people in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: I am concerned by reports of human rights violations against the Oromo people that included the murder of Ethiopian musician Hachalu Hundessa on 29 June, and the violence that followed in Addis Ababa and the Oromo region. I visited Ethiopia from 27 - 29 July and was able to discuss these events with the President, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the President of Oromia Region. I urged for transparent investigations into these incidents of violence and asked that those detained receive access to justice, and that their cases are heard promptly. I also expressed the need for more peaceful dialogue between different groups in Ethiopia and for space to be given for political debate. We shall continue to monitor the situation and to raise the importance of respect for human rights in meetings with the Ethiopian Government and regional leaders.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[84997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure his Department's management board is diverse in terms of (a) gender, (b) ethnicity and (c) experience.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) is committed to putting diversity and inclusion at its heart.

The people appointed to the interim Board bring a range of experience, including from FCDO, HM Treasury, BEIS, Cabinet Office, the private and voluntary sectors and academia. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by gender or ethnicity for the Board members as this would contravene GDPR principles. Biographies of all Board members can be found on Gov.UK.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Personnel Management**John Stevenson:**[\[84203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many full-time equivalent staff were employed in the (a) Foreign and Commonwealth Office's and (b) Department for International Development's human resources section in April 2020.

Nigel Adams:

As of the 31st March 2020, the Department for International Development had 64.6 FTE staff employed in the Human Resources Department and 27.3 FTE officers employed in the in-house HR Operations function.

As of the 31st March 2020, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office had 116.8 FTE staff employed in the Human Resources Directorate and 57.6 FTE officers employed in the in-house HR Operations function.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation**Catherine West:**[\[84721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development on British foreign policy objectives.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will maximise UK influence around the world by combining diplomatic leverage with world-leading development support and expertise. The FCDO will continue to pursue our national interests and projects the UK as a force for good in the world. We will promote the interests of British citizens, safeguard the UK's security, defend our values, reduce poverty and tackle global challenges with our international partners.

As the PM has made clear, the new FCDO will maximise the impact of our aid budget to help the world's poorest while making sure we get the best value for UK taxpayers money.

The objectives of the FCDO will be informed by the outcome of the Integrated Review, which is expected to conclude in the autumn. Both the review and the

inception of the FCDO are evidence of the Government's commitment to a unified British foreign policy that will maximise our influence around the world.

■ **India: British Nationals Abroad**

Zarah Sultana: [\[84743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the deaths of (a) Sakil Dawood, (b) Saeed Dawood and (c) Mohammed Aswat during riots in Gujarat in February 2002.

Nigel Adams:

We have not had any recent conversations with the Government of India about this. We stand ready to provide further consular assistance if requested.

■ **India: Religious Freedom**

Paul Girvan: [\[82301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on the persecution and murder of Christians and members of other minority religious groups in India.

Nigel Adams:

The British High Commission in New Delhi and our network of Deputy High Commissions maintain a continuous assessment of the human rights situation across India, talking regularly to the Government of India, including about freedom of religion or belief. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India: the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has raised these issues on several occasions with the Indian High Commissioner in London and his opposite number in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. We also continue to engage Indian religious leaders of all faiths and to support Indian partners to promote interfaith relations among young people

■ **Maira Shahbaz**

Alex Sobel: [\[82339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with his Pakistani counterpart on the decision by the Lahore High Court that 14-year old Maira Shahbaz must stay married to a man who allegedly abducted her at gunpoint in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We are closely monitoring Maira Shahbaz's case following her reported abduction in April. We are concerned about women's and girls' rights and ongoing reports of forced marriage and forced conversion in Pakistan, including such reports of this happening to women and girls from religious minorities such as Hindus, Christians and Sikhs. The UK Government strongly condemns the forced marriage and forced conversion of women and girls.

We regularly raise our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief, women and girl's rights and gender equality with the government of Pakistan at a senior level. Most recently, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon raised our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 15 July.

■ Myanmar: Rohingya

Claire Hanna:

[\[84755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress his Department has made in (a) advocating Myanmar accountability for crimes committed against the Rohingya population and (b) making representations on the Rohingya people's safe, voluntary and dignified return home.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been clear that those responsible for serious human rights violations should be held to account. We have used our role on the UN Security Council (UNSC) to increase international attention on the Rohingya crisis and we continue to lead calls for accountability. The UK has worked with partners to try and implement the Fact Finding Mission recommendations, including establishing the UN Independent Investigative Mechanism on Myanmar to collect and preserve evidence of atrocities. When I spoke to the Myanmar Minister for International Cooperation on 23 June, I encouraged Myanmar to continue to engage with the International Court of Justice process in a transparent way. On 6 July, the UK's Global Human Rights sanction regime (GHR) listed the Myanmar military's Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Commander-in-Chief, for overseeing the systematic and brutal violence against the Rohingya and other minorities, as set out in the Independent Fact Finding Mission Report. This is in addition to the sanctions which the UK secured through the EU, against 14 members of the Myanmar military responsible for serious human rights violations.

The UK has been clear that Rohingya returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified, in line with the principles of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). We agree with the UNHCR's assessment that conditions are not yet in place to enable this. Since early 2019 there have been serious clashes in Rakhine State between the Arakan Army, an Ethnic Armed Organisation, and the Myanmar military. We have called at the UNSC for an immediate cessation of hostilities. We continue to press the Government of Myanmar for full implementation of the Kofi Annan Rakhine Advisory Commission (RAC) recommendations, including granting citizenship, freedom of movement and permitting immediate and effective access for agencies. The UK is clear that the RAC recommendations remain the best and only internationally and domestically agreed template for tackling the problems in Rakhine State.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**

Theresa Villiers: [\[45034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will give priority to care homes in covid-19 testing.

Helen Whately:

Social care settings and the National Health Service are priority areas for testing under the Government's Testing Programme.

Following the launch of the Care Home Portal on 11 May, Whole Care Home testing through the National Testing Programme was initially made available to care homes that primarily look after older people or people with dementia. We met our target to reach those homes by 6 June, delivering over 1 million testing kits to almost 9,000 of these care homes.

From 7 June, we expanded eligibility for the service to all remaining adult care homes, which can now access whole care home testing for all residents and staff through the digital portal. We are issuing over 50,000 tests a day to care homes across the country, with the majority of these in high priority outbreak areas.

Any symptomatic or asymptomatic care home staff or residents can get a test and care homes with suspected positive cases will be able to access Whole Care Home testing via their local Health Protection Team. Care home staff are able to access testing through multiple channels, such as regional test sites, home testing, mobile testing units, as well as through the care home portal online.

■ Care Homes: Visits

Sarah Olney: [\[86130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to update visiting arrangements in care homes to allow for closer interaction between residents and their visitors while maintaining the health and safety of care workers and residents as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: Our first priority is to prevent infections in care homes, and this means that visiting policy should still be restricted with alternatives sought wherever possible.

However, we are aware that limiting visits in care homes has been difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones. The decision on whether or not to allow visitors, and in what circumstances will be for the relevant Director of Public Health and managers of each individual setting to make. Care homes will be supported by local infection control leads in making decisions about visiting, to ensure that the balance of risks and benefits is appropriately considered. Advice for residents and families should be set out in the visiting policy of the care home and

shared with them. All our guidance is designed with care users in mind, to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and respect and that their particular needs are addressed.

The latest guidance on visiting arrangements in care homes is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>

■ Clinical Trials: Medical Equipment

Alec Shelbrooke:

[85021]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all trials using new medical devices are logged centrally; and what steps he is taking to ensure that there is oversight of all non-drug trials.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Medical devices are regulated by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). All trials of new medical devices being developed for the United Kingdom market are reviewed by the MHRA before the devices are used on humans in these trials in the UK. The MHRA maintains a record of all such trials whether approved or refused. Plans are in place to make this information available to the public in future. The MHRA only has oversight of medicines and medical devices trials and therefore do not have oversight of all non-drug trials.

All non-drug trials (including device studies) are centrally reviewed for ethical approval by the Health Research Authority (HRA). If they meet a set of additional legal and policy criteria, they are granted approval to proceed in the National Health Service.

All clinical trials must be conducted in accordance with the Policy Framework for Health and Social Care, which describes the roles and responsibilities of those involved in research oversight.

There is an expectation that all trials are registered and a lay summary made available on the HRA website.

■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Mr David Davis:

[81521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which suppliers entered bids for the contract to provide contact tracers as part of the Government's covid-19 test and trace programme.

Mr David Davis:

[81523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department used to determine whether the bidders for the covid-19 test and trace contract had the necessary competencies to carry out contact tracing.

Mr David Davis:

[81524]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department made of the performance of bidders for the covid-19 test and trace contact tracing contract on previous Government contracts.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: The contracts awarded to Serco and Sitel to provide call handling services for the contact tracing initiative were made using direct awards under Lot 2 of Crown Commercial Service's Contact Centre Services framework which was varied under Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 Regulation 72 to allow for direct awards for COVID-19 related procurements.

Crown Commercial Service undertook a pre-procurement exercise engaging with all suppliers on Lot 2 to understand which could establish the contract centre in the volumes required and the timescales needed. All suppliers on Lot 2 were engaged with, in order to ascertain capabilities to meet the contract output specifications.

Serco and Sitel are approved suppliers on the Crown Commercial Service contact centre framework. They gained their places through fair and open competition via an Official Journal of the European Union procurement. Value for money and capability were part of the assessment criteria. The Department has put in place arrangements to ensure robust contract management in terms of performance and quality standards in line with relevant guidance.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Julian Sturdy:

[81837]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to covid-19 restrictions on contact between households, what assessment the Government has made of the challenges faced by households that rely on grandparents to assist with childcare; and what advice his Department has published for households in that situation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From Monday 14 September, people must not meet with those from other households socially in groups of more than six. This rule will not apply to individual households or support bubbles of more than six who will still be able to gather together.

Single-adult households are able to form a support bubble which allows for close contact as normal. The guidance on social distancing from those who people do not live with is critical to controlling the spread of the virus and keeping people safe, but we recognise that this is particularly challenging for people who rely on grandparents for childcare to comply with. We are looking closely at this issue at present.

Guidance on meeting people from outside of the household has been published and is available at the following link:

[See refreshed guidance on social contact, including the exceptions to the 6 person limit](#)

Justin Madders:

[82037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of community-acquired cases of covid-19 were from (a) healthcare workers, (b) patients discharged to care facilities and (c) patients discharged home.

Helen Whately:

Data on community acquired COVID-19 cases are not available in the format requested.

The latest number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases can be viewed at the following link:

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

Dr Rupa Huq:

[82212]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Covid-19 Symptom Study data that one in 10 people experience covid-19 symptoms for longer than three weeks.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[82213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to raise public awareness of the potential long-term effects of covid-19 on people who may have only had mild symptoms of the disease to date.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The stay at home guidance sets out that if someone who has been isolating for 10 days still has a temperature, they should continue to self-isolate and seek medical advice. People do not need to self-isolate after 10 days if they only have a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of COVID-19 infection, including the prevalence, severity and duration of symptoms, and how best to support recovery. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by Christopher Brightling at the University of Leicester. This study is one of the world's largest comprehensive research studies into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients and will inform future service design and provision.

The new 'Your COVID Recovery' service, announced on 5 July, forms part of NHS plans to expand access to COVID-19 rehabilitation treatments for those who have survived the virus but still have problems with breathing, mental health problems or other complications.

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[84280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support longitudinal studies to track (a) the durability of the covid-19 immune response and (b) the long term disease consequences in covid-19 patients.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A number of different studies are considering the durability of the COVID-19 immune response, by assessing antibody waning over time and whether previous infection protects against future infection. This includes UK Biobank, REACT-2 and the Public Health England SIREN study.

The National Health Service and the wider scientific community are currently working to better understand the disease course of COVID-19 infection, including the prevalence, severity and duration of symptoms, and how best to support recovery. The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by Christopher Brightling at the University of Leicester. This study is one of the world's largest comprehensive research studies into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients.

■ **Coronavirus: Kirklees**

Tracy Brabin:

[\[83897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for keeping additional covid-19 restrictions on (a) Batley and (b) other parts of Kirklees Council while removing restrictions from other areas in that local authority area.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: Local areas have been encouraged to take a new, collaborative approach to advise on the geographical boundaries of local restrictions. Local leaders make proposals to the Gold Local Action committee based on the latest data available. This means restrictions in some areas will only apply to certain wards, rather than the entire local authority area. Following a review of the epidemiological and contextual evidence, and in consideration of the suggestions made by local leaders, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care alongside the Chief Medical Officer and members of the Gold Local Action Committee agreed that rules must remain in place for some areas to protect local residents, and allow more time for the changes to have an effect, cutting transmission among households and businesses.

■ **Coronavirus: Research**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[84281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the pathology of the long term symptoms of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by Christopher Brightling at the University of Leicester. The study is multi-disciplinary and is one of the world's largest comprehensive research studies into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients.

This study will create a research platform embedded within clinical care to understand the long-term outcomes for survivors following hospitalisation with COVID-19. Expert groups from across the United Kingdom will use standardised assessments of patients, including advanced imaging, recording of information and collection of samples, and will also cover the study of novel interventions in the rehabilitation pathway, including mental health interventions.

Andrew Gwynne:**[84980]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the research study into the long-term health effects of covid-19 on hospitalised patients announced on 5 July 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: The National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation have invested £8.4 million in the Post-HOSPitalisation COVID-19 study (PHOSP-COVID), led by the University of Leicester. The study is one of the world's largest comprehensive research studies into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients.

The study is well underway and has established a national platform to integrate research and clinical service. The first patient was recruited on 10 August. The study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee and obtained ISRCTN registration. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.isrctn.com/ISRCTN10980107>

The researchers have also established nine expert working groups and a Patient, Public Involvement Group to ensure the value of the patient voice is maximised and integrated in PHOSP-COVID.

Andrew Gwynne:**[84981]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for research into the long-term effects of covid-19 on people who contracted the virus but were never hospitalised.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: The Department is aware of reports that those with milder illnesses of COVID-19 can experience ongoing symptoms. In light of these findings, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care convened a roundtable meeting with researchers and clinicians – including those specialising in community health – to establish what more can be done to understand and mitigate the long-term health effects of COVID-19.

We recognise the need for further research into the longer-term effects of the virus in those who did not require hospitalisation, and the Department is considering options for future work in this area.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[84144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 August 2020 to Question 43829 on coronavirus: screening, what the reasons were for the time taken to respond that the data was not held in the format requested; and if he will publish the data which he holds that is relevant to that Question.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: With regards to Question 43829, resources within the Department have been deployed to the NHS Test and Trace service including the National Testing Programme in response to the pandemic, which can occasionally lead to a delay.

We do not hold data in this format.

Mr Mark Harper:

[\[84659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to increase laboratory capacity in the covid-19 antigen testing system.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: We have built the largest diagnostic testing industry in British history at pace, from scratch. We are scaling up our testing capacity even further to 500,000 tests a day by the end of October. We are augmenting the existing diagnostic network with additional laboratories and adding capacity this month and throughout the autumn.

■ **Disability: Physiotherapy**

Jim Shannon:

[\[84244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide physiotherapy for disabled patients who have had covid-19.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked with the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust to develop a digital, interactive, personalised recovery programme for people recovering from COVID-19. The new 'Your COVID Recovery' service, which was announced on 5 July, forms part of National Health Service plans to expand access to COVID-19 rehabilitation treatments for those who have survived the virus but still have problems with breathing, mental health problems or other complications.

■ Fertility: Health Services

Catherine West:

[\[86123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase access to fertility services for people regardless of their (a) relationship status and (b) location.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment, is a matter for local healthcare commissioners. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population. In respect of increasing National Health Service fertility services, the Government has been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

Ministers have written to CCGs about variations in access to fertility services twice in the last 18 months, most recently in December 2019.

Discussions are continuing with NHS England about how access to fertility services can best be addressed.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Coronavirus

Richard Fuller:

[\[63277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which categories of health and social care providers are eligible for antibody testing for covid-19.

Helen Whately:

NHS England has made antibody tests available to all its staff including those working on National Health Service premises but not directly employed by the NHS, and those in primary, community, and mental health care including community pharmacists. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/antibody-testing-programme-roll-out-for-nhs-staff-and-patients-letter-from-pauline-philip-and-professor-steven-powis>

Antibody testing is also being made available for all paid social care staff in England.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[84274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure equity of access to IVF treatment throughout England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: The level of provision of local health services available to patients, including fertility treatment is a matter for local healthcare commissioners. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a statutory responsibility

to commission healthcare services including fertility services that meet the needs of their whole population. In respect of National Health Service fertility services, the Government has been consistently clear that we expect CCGs to commission fertility services in line with NICE guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

Ministers have written to CCGs about variations in access to fertility services twice in the last 18 months, most recently in December 2019.

Discussions are continuing with NHS England about how these equity issues can best be addressed.

■ **Medicine: Research**

Matt Western:

[\[82277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the income of medical research charities; and what steps he is taking to address the shortfall in UK medical research funding.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Medical research charities are an integral part of our world-leading life sciences sector. The Department is closely liaising with the Association of Medical Research Charities, as well as individual charities, to understand the impact of the pandemic on this sector and identify how best the Government and charities can work together to ensure that patients continue benefiting from charity-funded research.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[81687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 30 June 2020 on the Government's contract with TransUnion.

Helen Whately:

We replied to the hon. Member's letter on 19 August 2020.

■ **Surgery: Coronavirus**

Justin Madders:

[\[75354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Royal College of Surgeons of England's report entitled Elective Surgery during COVID-19, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of that report's recommendation that surgeons be given access to same-day covid-19 testing results to enable testing of surgical patients both before and upon admission and upon discharge.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2020]: We are engaging with stakeholders from across the local and national health and care system, including the Royal College of Surgeons of England, to ensure our programme is as effective as possible ahead of the winter.

Clinicians in the National Health Service are able to test patients where clinically appropriate, in line with the Chief Medical Officer and NHS England guidance. We continue to work with the NHS to ensure testing is available where appropriate and clinically indicated.

■ Transplant Surgery

Dan Jarvis:

[\[83818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timescale is for the number of transplant operations to return to pre-covid-19 outbreak levels.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: In April 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement communicated the priorities for clinical service restoration to all service providers and commissioners, highlighting organ transplantation as a priority. A further letter in July set out targets for expected rates of recovery of elective activity in September of at least 80% of the trust's last year's activity for overnight electives, rising to 90% in October.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work closely with NHS Blood and Transplant to restore transplant services, including kidney transplants. Deceased organ donation and transplantation activity is now restored to pre-COVID-19 levels. In terms of living donation, the United Kingdom living kidney sharing scheme October 2020 matching run will proceed according to the scheduled timetable.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Greg Clark:

[\[81735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of when covid-19 testing capacity will be sufficient to allow the testing of all travellers to and from the UK.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Our primary focus is symptomatic people to ensure that everyone who needs a test can get one, therefore NHS Test and Trace tests are not currently available for testing to reduce the self-isolation period for international arrivals. National Health Service testing capacity is reserved for testing symptomatic people in the United Kingdom, with any spare capacity being used to where most clinically effective.

Work is ongoing with clinicians, the devolved administrations and the travel industry to consider if and how testing could be used to reduce the self-isolation period, but any potential change would need to minimise the chance that positive cases are missed, and maximise compliance with self-isolation rules.

HOME OFFICE**■ Crime: Young People****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[81570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the rate of crime involving young people.

Kit Malthouse:

No data exists on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the rate of crime involving young people. However, the National Police Chiefs Council reported on its website on 27 August 2020 that provisional data from police forces in England and Wales shows a reduction in crime during the Coronavirus outbreak and that the vast majority of the public are following government regulations enacted in response to the crisis. It also reported that the provisional data indicates certain crime trends are returning towards pre-lockdown levels. This report is available from:

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/provisional-data-shows-crime-slowly-returning-to-2019-levels>

The Office for National Statistics published a report 'Coronavirus and crime in England and Wales' on 26 August 2020, which estimated a significant reduction in crime during April and May 2020 compared with a two-month average in the pre-lockdown period, and that reductions were seen across many types of crime. This report is available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/coronavirusandcrimeinenglandandwales/august2020>

Police recorded crime statistics and Crime Survey of England and Wales data covering the period to June 2020 will be released in October 2020.

■ DNA: Databases**Philip Davies:****[88851]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many DNA profiles have been removed from the national DNA database since 1 April 2018.

Kit Malthouse:

Between 01/04/2018 and 31/03/2019 117,430 subject profile records and 4,846 crime scene profile records have been deleted from the National DNA Database.

Between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2020 124,492 subject profile records and 7,597 crime scene profile records have been deleted from the National DNA Database.

■ Hampshire Constabulary: Finance

Stephen Morgan:

[\[86750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment has she made of the effect of the police allocation formula adequacy of funding allocated to Hampshire Constabulary.

Kit Malthouse:

The police funding formula remains the most reliable mechanism the department has to distribute core grant funding to forces. The police funding settlement for 2020/21 sets out the biggest increase in funding for the policing system since 2010, with Hampshire Constabulary receiving a total of up to £366.4m, an increase of up to £26m on 2019/20.

The Government will consider the way core grant funding is distributed to forces as part of our longer-term vision for policing.

■ Home Office: Industrial Health and Safety

Grahame Morris:

[\[87531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the request made to her Department by the PCS union under Regulation 9 of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 to form a building-wide health and safety committee for 2 Marsham Street.

James Brokenshire:

Trades Union representatives have been invited to attend the regular 2 Marsham Street House Committee meetings in the interests of constructive dialogue in relation to the spaces that are shared between the separate employers based in the building. This House Committee does not constitute a statutory safety committee as set out in Regulation 9 Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regs /Section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This is in line with the fact that health & safety matters within each department's area of occupancy are a delegated responsibility for the respective department. The Home Office already has a well-established health and safety committee in place for the purposes of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and those who interact with our premises

■ Home Office: Racial Discrimination

Catherine West:

[\[86124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) police officers, (b) police staff, (c) National Crime Agency staff and (d) UK Border Force staff have been (i) suspended and (ii) dismissed for racism in the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

A & B) The Home Office collects and publishes information annually on the outcome of misconduct proceedings and criminal investigations involving police officers, including the number of officers that have been dismissed following proceedings.

However, information on the reason for dismissal is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

The latest data on the outcomes following misconduct proceedings, which covers cases in the year ending March 2019, is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-30-september-2019>.

The College of Policing publish data annually relating to those who have been dismissed from policing and placed on the Police Barred List. The most recent data shows that, in the period ending 31 March 2019, 15 officers and 7 members of police staff were dismissed under the category 'equality and diversity'. This data is available here:

https://www.college.police.uk/News/Collegenews/Documents/Barred_List_2019.pdf

Suspension of police officers or police staff is a matter for local forces. The Home Office does not collect or store this data.

C) No NCA officer has been suspended on grounds of racism in the last 3 years. There has been one dismissal of an NCA officer on racism grounds in the last 3 years.

D) Border Force does not hold the data on suspensions on the grounds of racism in the last three years. There has been one dismissal of a Border Force officer on racism grounds in the last three years.

■ Hygiene: Products

Sir Paul Beresford:

[88239]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant of the Answer of 3 September 2020 to Question 81490 on Hygiene: Products, whether the National Fire Chiefs Council's press statement setting out the low risk of alcohol-based hand sanitisers takes into consideration the Health and Safety Executive's guidance on storing alcohol in workplaces across the UK.

James Brokenshire:

The consideration of guidance that informs National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC's) press statements is a matter for the NFCC.

Under the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002, employers must assess and eliminate or reduce risks from dangerous substances so far as is reasonably practicable in order to keep people safe.

As outlined in my answer to Question 81490, those responsible for premises are also required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to consider the fire risks on that premises and ensure that these are mitigated to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

■ Immigrants: Finance

Stephen Timms: [\[87474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for a change of conditions to the no recourse to public funds condition were made (a) with and (b) without a representative; and what proportion of each type of application has been (i) successful and (ii) unsuccessful in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017.

Stephen Timms: [\[87475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants for a change of conditions to the no recourse to public funds condition have been made in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017 were aged (a) under 18, (b) 18-25, (c) 25-30, (d) 30-40, (e) 40-50, (f) 50-60, (g) 60-70, (h) 70-80 and (i) over 80.

Stephen Timms: [\[87476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applicants for a change of conditions to no recourse to public funds made in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017 had dependents under 18.

Stephen Timms: [\[87477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants for a change of conditions to no recourse to public funds in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017 had dependents under 18 who are (a) British children and (b) have a disability.

Stephen Timms: [\[87478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applicants with dependents for a change of conditions to no recourse to public funds in each quarter since the third quarter of 2017 (a) applied as single applicants, (b) made a joint application (c) had a non-applying partner.

Kevin Foster:

Following previous questions and the commitment given to UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), Change of Conditions information is now part of the transparency data which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-protection-data-august-2020>. The relevant data is in tab CoC_01.

Currently we cannot provide the data requested because this information is not readily available and would require a more detailed examination of all Change of Conditions cases to establish whether the data requested is held and would meet the quality requirements for release.

As part of the regular publication of this data the Home Office will review whether the data can be meaningfully broken down any further.

■ Police: Staff

Mr Steve Baker: [\[88864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will secure funding settlements for the police extending over two to three years in the Spending Review.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[88865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that police officers are not used to backfill police staff roles to achieve cost savings; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker: [\[88866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, she will ensure that police staff roles are sufficiently resourced through the Spending Review to ensure that new police officers are not diverted away from core policing duties.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department is in the process of undertaking work on the Spending Review, in consultation with the policing sector. We will continue to make the best case for policing to deliver this Government's top priorities and will make an announcement in due course.

■ Police: Training

Wera Hobhouse: [\[88375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for which foreign states the College of Policing provided training courses in (a) 2017-18, (b) 2018-19 and (c) 2019-20; and what the subject of each of those training courses was.

Kit Malthouse:

This is a matter for the College of Policing, but I can confirm that it does provide bespoke training packages to international partners.

■ Security: Training

Mark Eastwood: [\[86773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timetable is for the launch of the Security Training Fund.

James Brokenshire:

The Home Office has listened to the security concerns of our faith communities, including through the recent public consultation on faith security. We recognise that protective security must be tailored to support the specific requirements of faith communities. The Home Office is currently developing a security training package, which will be suitable for all faiths. This will ensure that our commitment of 19 March 2019 to deliver this training within three years is met. Security advice for places of worship is currently available for free from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office on GOV.UK.

■ **Trespass: Reform**

Joy Morrissey:

[\[88400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will set out a timetable for bringing forward legislative proposals to reform the law on trespassing.

Kit Malthouse:

We have a clear manifesto commitment to tackle unauthorised encampments. We remain determined to ensure that the police have the powers they need.

The consultation has closed and the Government is considering the response. It is our firm aim to bring forward legislation later this session.

■ **Unexplained Wealth Orders**

Alyn Smith:

[\[82386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the efficacy of Unexplained Wealth Orders in tackling financial crime in the UK.

Kit Malthouse:

Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs) were introduced as part of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 and came into force from 1 January 2018. Whilst still relatively new legislation, the Home Office assesses that UWOs (and associated Interim Freezing Orders) are an important addition to existing powers which can result in the provision of critical information which could not be obtained in any other way. UWOs have been used in four cases so far, in relation to property worth an estimated £143.2m. The Home Office keeps the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Criminal Finances Act 2017 under review to ensure that all powers remain effective.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Local Government: Sanctions**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[86722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Supreme Court ruling of 29 April in R (on the application of Palestine Solidarity Campaign Ltd and another) (Appellants) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Respondent), what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to allow local authorities to pursue boycotts, divestments and sanctions against foreign nations and UK defence industries.

Luke Hall:

The Government remains firmly opposed to local boycotts which can damage integration and community cohesion, hinder exports, and harm foreign relations and the UK's economic and international security. Local authorities should not undertake boycotts that could undermine foreign policy, which is a matter for the UK Government alone. We will legislate as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

■ Mortgages**Daisy Cooper:**[\[88934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 86761 on Mortgages, what steps he is taking to encourage mortgage lenders to accept equivalent evidence; and what examples of suitable equivalent evidence he has encouraged mortgage lenders to accept.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon. Member to my answer of 11 September to question UIN 86618.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia****Emily Thornberry:**[\[87504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 21 January 2016 air-strike on a house in Majz 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:[\[87505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 7 August 2016 air-strike on a store in Nihm 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:[\[87506\]](#)

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 August 2016 air-strike in Shara'ab Al-Rawnah 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:[\[87507\]](#)

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 August 2016 air-strike on a residential area 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: [\[87508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 10 March 2017 air-strike on a market in Al-Khawkhah 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: [\[87509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 17 May 2017 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: [\[87510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 18 July 2017 air-strike on a displaced persons camp 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: [\[87511\]](#)

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 house in Taizz 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: [\[87512\]](#)

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 a residential area in Bani Matar 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: [\[87513\]](#)

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 November 2017 air-strike on a residential area in Aflah Yamin 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: [\[87514\]](#)

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 November 2017 air-strike on stalls in Abs 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: [\[87515\]](#)

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 15 December 2017 air-strike on a residential area in Al-Khawkhah 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: [\[87516\]](#)

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 30 December 2017 air-strike on a market in Al-Jirahi 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: [\[87517\]](#)

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 February 2018 air-strike on a vehicle in Kitaf Wa Al-Boqe'e 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: [\[87518\]](#)

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 August 2016 air-strike on a crisp factory in Nahda 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: [\[88258\]](#)

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 houses 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:

[\[88259\]](#)

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 2018 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:

[\[88260\]](#)

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 June 2018 air-strike on a cholera treatment centre in Abs 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:

[\[88261\]](#)

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 August 2018 air-strike on a vehicle in al-Duraihmi 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:

[\[88262\]](#)

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 October 2018 air-strike on a bus in Hodeidah 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:

[\[88263\]](#)

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 October 2018 air-strike on a market in Hodeidah 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: [\[88264\]](#)

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: [\[88265\]](#)

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 26 March 2019 air-strike on a petrol station near a hospital in Kitaf 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: [\[88266\]](#)

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 31 March 2015 air-strike on a dairy factory in Al-Hali 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: [\[88267\]](#)

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 16 April 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Bani Suraim 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: [\[88268\]](#)

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 April 2015 air-strike on a hotel in Harad 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: [\[88269\]](#)

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 1 May 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:

[\[88270\]](#)

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 5 May 2015 air-strike on stores in Sihar 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:

[\[88271\]](#)

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 August 2019 air-strikes on houses and an open space in Al-Sawamel 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:

[\[88272\]](#)

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 September 2019, air-strikes in Al Muzaimir 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:

I refer the Rt Hon. Lady to the answer that I gave on 11th September (UIN: 84666).

■ Tobacco: Imports

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88831\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what information her Department holds on the 10 largest source countries for tobacco leaf imports into the UK in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what volumes were imported from those countries; and what tariff rates are set to apply to imports of tobacco leaf from those countries from 1 January 2021.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on the UK tobacco manufacturing industry of the imposition of the UK Global Tariff on imports of tobacco leaf from 1 January 2021.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the effect on (a) the average prices, (b) consumption and (c) tax revenues

deriving from the sale of duty-paid tobacco products in the UK as a result of the imposition of the UK Global Tariff on imports of tobacco leaf from 1 January 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [88834]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the imposition of the UK Global Tariff on imports of tobacco leaf from 1 January 2021 on forecast levels of smuggling of counterfeit and other tobacco products into the UK.

Greg Hands:

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) remains committed to promoting compliance and tackling avoidance and evasion. Guidance on how to not facilitate smuggling of tobacco products is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-477-tobacco-products-duty-control-of-supply-chains/excise-notice-477-tobacco-products-duty-control-of-supply-chains-1>.

In addition, on 12 July 2020, we announced more than £705m in additional funding to make sure our border systems are robust and operational.

We will publish more analysis in the Tax Information and Impact Note (TIIN) alongside the legislation, as is standard practice.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Jim Shannon: [87547]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that freedom of religion or belief and other human rights concerns are being taken into consideration during bilateral trade negotiations between the UK and other Governments.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government has a strong history of promoting our values globally, and our strong economic relationships with trading partners allow us to have open discussions on a range of difficult issues, including rights and responsibilities. As such, we will continue to champion the freedom of religion.

■ Trade Agreements: Japan

Daisy Cooper: [88932]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department plans to publish an impact assessment of the UK-Japan trade agreement.

Greg Hands:

A full Impact Assessment will be published when the agreement is laid before parliament.

Daisy Cooper: [88933]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's estimate that the recently announced UK-Japan trade agreement will result in a £1.5

billion boost to the UK economy, whether that figure refers specifically to an increase in UK GDP; what year was used as a baseline when calculating that figure; and what (a) maximum, (b) minimum and (c) central estimates were used to calculate that figure.

Greg Hands:

Further details on the preliminary analysis is set out in our published Scoping Assessment and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-approach-to-negotiating-a-free-trade-agreement-with-japan>

A full Impact Assessment will be published when the agreement is laid before parliament.

■ **UK Industry Exports Control Forum**

Emily Thornberry:

[85998]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish a complete (a) transcript and (b) audio-visual record of the public presentation provided by an official in her Department entitled UK Export Control Legislation at the UK Exports Control Forum convened by the Export Group for Aerospace, Defence and Dual-Use and Norton Rose Fulbright in London on 6 June 2018.

Emily Thornberry:

[86599]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will publish a complete transcript or audio-visual record of the public presentation provided by an official in her Department entitled The Future of Export Licensing Services: LITE and Other Business Changes at the UK Exports Control Forum, convened by the Export Group for Aerospace, Defence and Dual-Use and Norton Rose Fulbright in London on 6 June 2018.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The 'UK Exports Control Forum' is not part of HM Government, so we do not hold transcripts or audio-visual records of the meeting to which the Rt Hon. Lady refers.

JUSTICE

■ **Prisoners: Disability and Special Educational Needs**

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[86579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners in England and Wales have (a) dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties, (b) speech and language difficulties and (c) other special educational needs and disabilities.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[86580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate his Department has made of the level of undiagnosed (a) dyslexia, (b) other specific learning difficulties, (c) speech and language difficulties and (d) other special educational needs and disabilities in prisons.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[86581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to support prisoners with (a) dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties, (b) speech and language difficulties and (c) other special educational needs and disabilities.

Lucy Frazer:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is committed to meeting the needs of all vulnerable offenders, including those with learning disabilities, difficulties and speech, language and communication needs. All individuals who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) need to be able to access the right support to help them engage with their sentence.

For those who go into learning and where screening indicates an issue, education suppliers assess them to ensure the right adaptations and support arrangements are put in place.

The available data on offender learning participation, and learner characteristics, is published by the Department for Education. Data on learning difficulties and/or disabilities amongst those prisoners who engage in prison education is available via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-education-and-training>

In addition, prison officer training covers disabilities and responding sensitively and appropriately to behaviours.

■ Prisons: Cockroaches

Ms Lyn Brown:

[86612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons recorded cockroach infestations in each month from January to August 2020.

Lucy Frazer:

For the period January to August 2020, six prisons reported pests at their establishments.

Each prison in England and Wales has a pest control contract in place managed by the relevant provider and monitored by HMPPS contract management staff. Where any infestation takes place, appropriate action is taken to eradicate the problem.

■ Prisons: Hygiene

Ms Lyn Brown:

[86613]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent representations her Department has received on (a) delays and (b) inadequacies in the delivery of clean prison kit from HMPPS stores.

Lucy Frazer:

No recorded delays or inadequacies have been recorded recently with the supply of clothing and/or equipment from the HM Prison and Probation stores at Branston.

TRANSPORT**■ Acceleration Unit: Public Appointments****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[88862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, (a) who are the members of the new Transport Acceleration Unit and (b) how were those members selected.

Andrew Stephenson:

The DfT Acceleration Unit is a new team within the Department. The team is being established and is anticipated to comprise five members of staff. Darren Shirley (current Campaign for Better Transport, Chief Executive) will be the Director of the Unit, the remainder of the team are not members of the Senior Civil Service and therefore are not named. All five appointments are being made on a temporary basis whilst the Unit is established.

Applications from transport organisations and others were sought. Role profiles setting out the required skills and experience were developed. Potential candidates were assessed against these criteria. Where fair and open competition has not been used, all appointments have been in line with the agreed Exceptions to the Civil Service Recruitment Principles.

■ Airports: Non-domestic Rates**Seema Malhotra:**[\[88874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the alleviation of business rates for airports in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

Business rates are managed by HM Treasury in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Local Authorities. The Department for Transport and HM Treasury have been engaging closely with industry, through the Expert Steering Group, to understand their assessment of the outlook for the sector and implications of any sector specific support measures, including business rates.

■ British Airways: Conditions of Employment**Dan Jarvis:**[\[88869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the email correspondence to British Airways staff of 2 June 2020 on the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) representatives of the

International Airlines Group on proposed redundancies and changes to terms and conditions of employment.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises that, despite the measures put in place to protect the economy, there remain serious challenges for the aviation sector, and we are working at pace to ensure the recovery of the aviation sector. Departments across Government, including the Department for Transport, are working together to progress options to support individuals affected.

I appreciate that this is a very worrying time for BA's loyal and devoted airline staff and their families. Although these are commercial decisions for companies, they are decisions which I nevertheless profoundly regret. It would not be appropriate to comment on any individual discussions.

■ **Bus Services: Coronavirus**

Gordon Henderson:

[\[86643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ensure additional support for the coach industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

On 8 August, the Government announced a funding package of over £40 million for Local Transport Authorities to procure additional, dedicated home to education transport services, including the provision of additional coach services.

This funding will help children and young people get to school and college, whilst social distancing reduces the capacity of existing public transport.

Coach operators could contact local authorities to discuss their home to school transportation plans.

The Government has also announced several measures available to UK businesses, including the coach sector, to support them through this time, including: a further exemption to the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations until July 2021; Government recognition of refund credits under the Bonded Coach Holiday Scheme to allow customers to book a future holiday or request a refund when trading resumes; and access to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan Scheme, and Time to Pay.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Inland Waterways**

Robert Lorgan:

[\[86782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect on (a) levels of active travel and (b) the connectivity of the most deprived areas of England of Canal & River Trust proposals for 30 towpath improvement schemes across the country; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

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

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

Department for Transport: Staff**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[88811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many members of staff in his Department were (a) working at their normal place of work, (b) working from home, (c) on annual leave, (d) on sickness absence and (e) not working for another reason in the week commencing 7 September 2020; and what plans he has in place to encourage departmental employees back to their normal place of work.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The core department has, over the last few months, flexed to working almost entirely from home, and has continued to deliver against our objectives. From 1 September 2020, our two primary offices in London and Hastings were made Covid secure and were opened to staff with strict social distancing measures in place.

- a) Since opening on 1 September, 32% of core DfT staff have returned to their usual workplace, with a) 24% attending during the w/b 7 September;
- b) The remainder of staff were either working from home or absent due to annual leave, sickness or other reasons (see below);
- c) On average, there was an 8% absence due to annual leave each day during the w/b 7 September;
- d) On average, there were 11 absences less than 1% due to sickness each day during the w/b 7 September;
- e) On average, there were 51 absences (2%) due to other reasons (including maternity leave) each day during the w/b 7 September.

Our number one priority is the safety of our staff, and we are continuing to look for opportunities to maximise the capacity in our buildings whilst ensuring they remain Covid secure. The core Department's headquarters, Great Minster House, is currently undergoing a planned refurbishment which is limiting our safe capacity and demand is currently at capacity. As each stage of refurbishment is completed, further capacity will be released with social distancing measures in place to meet the increasing demand, and we are exploring other options to maximise space available for staff to return.

■ Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance**Andy Slaughter:** [\[88828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) membership, (b) terms of reference (c) work programme and (d) budget is of the Hammersmith Bridge taskforce.

Rachel Maclean:

The first meeting of the Hammersmith Bridge task force, chaired by Baroness Vere, took place on 16 September 2020. Alongside the Department, the task force has a membership of all key stakeholders including: Transport for London; The London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Richmond upon Thames; the Port of London Authority; the Greater London Authority, and; Network Rail.

The task force will focus on urgently pulling together all necessary information, including technical and operational information and costs, in order to reach a decision on the most appropriate way to safely re-open Hammersmith Bridge to full use and provide appropriate temporary measures during the works.

Any funding will be subject to the findings of the task force and the agreed next steps.

■ Passengers: Coronavirus**Dan Jarvis:** [\[88868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that passengers are financially compensated for cancelled flights as a result of changes to Government travel advice during the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

The department is in regular contact with industry and has encouraged businesses to act fairly during this unprecedented event. The Government has been clear that airlines and travel agents should not deny consumers their legal right to a refund, if it is requested and this should be done in a timely manner. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) undertook a review of the refund policies of all UK airlines, as well as a number of international airlines that operate flights to and from the UK. The CAA has utilised this review to influence airlines to change their processes and practices in order to improve performance in providing refunds. The CAA's actions have led to an improved quality of service and performance from most airlines. The CAA continues to work with carriers to drive down waiting times, but balancing the support businesses need during this unprecedented situation.

■ Pedestrian Areas and Pedestrian Crossings: Disability**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[86767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to support the development of disability friendly pavements and crossings.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As set out in the Inclusive Transport Strategy, the Department wants to see well maintained pavements, appropriately placed dropped kerbs and navigable and legible routes in our public realm.

Local authorities are responsible for the design of their streets and public realm. It is for them to ensure their streets, including pavements and crossings, are designed to be inclusive and meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

To help deliver this, we are updating Inclusive Mobility, the key piece of design guidance covering the pedestrian environment as a whole. This will also include advice covering the much greater knowledge and understanding now available of the needs of those with hidden disabilities, including autism, dementia and mental health conditions.

■ Railways: Repairs and Maintenance**Lilian Greenwood:****[88859]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he intends to publish an updated Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline list, which was last updated on 21 October 2019.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline showing the status of rail enhancement schemes at different stages of development will be published on an annual basis. An update of this will be published following the Spending Review.

Lilian Greenwood:**[88860]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what rail schemes are listed at any stage of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline as of September 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline Schemes Update was last published in October 2019, and can be found at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840709/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline.pdf

The schemes currently in the Pipeline are at different stages of development and spread across the country. The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline will be updated on an annual basis and will be published in due course.

Lilian Greenwood:**[88861]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to accelerate projects listed in the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We want to see rail infrastructure projects delivered faster and as efficiently as possible.

We have implemented the Small Operational Enhancements Fund which will allow smaller schemes that give rapid operational benefits to progress quickly through the pipeline.

In order to deliver all transport infrastructure projects better, greener and faster DfT has established a new Acceleration Unit. It will seek to ensure that we unblock issues that impact the delivery of infrastructure projects, with close Ministerial support and oversight.

■ Road Traffic Control

Dr Rupa Huq:

[86723]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been received by each local authority in (a) London and (b) England for the purposes of creating low traffic neighbourhoods.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government's £225 million Emergency Active Travel Fund, launched in May, is designed to help local authorities implement measures to create an environment that is safer for both walking and cycling. This can include the development of low traffic neighbourhoods, should a local authority see fit.

Full funding allocations to local authorities for tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund and indicative allocations for tranche 2 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations/emergency-active-travel-fund-total-indicative-allocations> . Local authorities have received their tranche 1 funding, and an announcement on tranche 2 funding is due to be made shortly.

■ Shipping: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[86559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to the maritime sector as part of the economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Andrew Stephenson:

The maritime sector plays a vital role in the UK economy and continues to provide vital freight and key worker services throughout the pandemic. However, as with many parts of the economy, it has faced significant disruption and challenges. That is why the Chancellor announced a £330bn package of financial support to support businesses and employees during these unprecedented times. In addition, the Department provided bespoke financial support to ensure that critical lifeline and freight services continued to operate through the most challenging period.

My Department is now working closely across the maritime sector on their restart plans identifying the support that is needed to enable the safe resumption and continued increase of services and operations. We are also working with the sector on a longer-term Maritime Recovery Plan which will build on the Maritime 2050

launched by the Government last year. The Recovery Plan will draw on the plans the industry has already provided and consider both fiscal and non-fiscal opportunities.

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the maritime sector on decarbonising that sector as part of the transition towards reaching net zero by 2050.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department engages in regular discussions with the maritime sector in relation to decarbonisation and the transition towards net zero.

Officials attend standing industry meetings such as the Chamber of Shipping's Carbon Working Group, and have regularly consulted over the summer period with industry and civil society on maritime decarbonisation issues, including net zero.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support the Government is providing to the maritime sector to help it decarbonise.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport is working actively with the maritime sector to support decarbonisation at both international and domestic level.

Internationally we are working with other high ambition states and the sector to develop and adopt pragmatic, effective short and medium term measures that will peak and reduce emissions from the sector.

Domestically we have published research exploring the opportunities and challenges arising from decarbonisation, to provide the sector with greater clarity on what is required to achieve decarbonisation, and in support of this the Department has provided £1.5m of grants through Maritime Research and Innovation UK, supporting clean maritime innovation in the UK

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with the maritime sector on the effect decarbonising that sector will have on improving (a) the environment and (b) air quality.

Andrew Stephenson:

Officials have regularly engaged with industry on the issue of maritime decarbonisation, particularly since the launch of the Clean Maritime Council, in 2018. When discussing the need for rapid decarbonisation with the maritime sector the Department for Transport has been careful to consider and include the opportunities for wider environmental improvements, including to air quality.

Research carried out for the Department in support of the Clean Maritime Plan considered air quality elements alongside decarbonisation, and looked at options for

decarbonisation that would also maximise the air quality benefits. This work has been published on Gov.UK, and was shared with the maritime sector as part of a wider dialogue on zero emissions shipping.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions the Government has had with the maritime sector on the potential effect of decarbonising that sector in securing a transition from jobs reliant on carbon industries to those in low and zero-carbon sectors.

Andrew Stephenson:

In 2019, the Department published the Clean Maritime Plan, which identified the potential for clean economic growth in the UK as a result of the transition to zero emission shipping. In line with the Government's vision for sustainable economic growth as set out in the Clean Growth Strategy and Industrial Strategy, the Clean Maritime Plan seeks to support the innovation already present in British manufacturing, technology, fuel production and services, encouraging the translation of this expertise to the potential new clean maritime market.

The Clean Maritime Plan has been developed in close partnership with the maritime industry. This has included an extensive programme of stakeholder engagement, including the establishment of a Clean Maritime Council, alongside workshops and ongoing dialogue.

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[86582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had on the role decarbonising the maritime sector can play in reaching Net Zero by 2050; and will he make a statement.

Andrew Stephenson:

In June 2019, the UK became the first major economy to legislate for a net zero domestic greenhouse gas emission target by 2050^[1]. This target includes emissions from domestic shipping, making the case for supporting maritime decarbonisation even more urgent^[2]. The Clean Maritime Plan, published in 2019, sets out an ambitious and bold plan to put the sector on a path to deliver this objective while securing growth opportunities for the UK.

The publication of the Clean Maritime Plan was underpinned by extensive stakeholder engagement with the UK maritime industry on decarbonising maritime, including through the Clean Maritime Council, which was established in 2018 to ensure strong collaboration between Government, industry and academia on this matter. This partnership continues today, supporting my Department's action in tackling shipping emissions and ensuring that the whole transport sector delivers on the legislative objective to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

^[1]<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law>

^[2] Whilst international shipping emissions are not formally included in the net-zero target at present, the Government is still required to take these emissions into account when setting carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act.

Sir Mike Penning:

[86583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the value of decarbonising the maritime sector in terms of economic growth.

Andrew Stephenson:

In 2015, the Department published the Maritime Growth Study, which considered all aspects of the maritime sector and identified where action could be taken to generate growth^[1]. Following the publication of Maritime 2050 in 2019, which builds on the findings of the Maritime Growth Study, the Department published the Clean Maritime Plan, which identified the potential for clean economic growth in the UK as a result of the transition to zero emission shipping^[2].

Alongside the Plan, the Department published an assessment of the value of potential economic opportunities from low and zero emission shipping. This review provided a framework for assessing the scale of the opportunity generated by emission reduction technologies, including a mapping of the relevant supply chain, an assessment of the global uptake of these technologies, the economic footprint of the UK firms in the supply chain and the UK's share of global export of these technologies ^[3].

^[1]<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-growth-study>

^[2]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815664/clean-maritime-plan.pdf

^[3]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/815666/economic-opportunities-low-zero-emission-shipping.pdf

Sir Mike Penning:

[86584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had on the role decarbonising the maritime sector can play in reaching net zero by 2050.

Andrew Stephenson:

The domestic maritime sector falls under the UK's national net zero target, and in common with the wider economy will need to be decarbonised by 2050 in order to achieve net zero.

The Department has regular meetings with industry and civil society on the issue of decarbonisation, and has published extensive research on Gov.UK into the opportunities and challenges presented by the sector's transition to net zero.

■ Transport: Hydrogen

Allan Dorans:

[86751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential role hydrogen in decarbonising transport.

Rachel Maclean:

In 2018, the Department for Transport published the outputs of the Transport Energy Model. The model provides a clear assessment of the relative environmental impacts, including on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality, of a range of fuel and powertrain options for cars, vans, buses and heavy goods vehicles over the period to 2050, including hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

The Transport Secretary is exploring options for green hydrogen in transport across freight, buses, trains, maritime and aviation and how the UK can lead the world in its deployment and use. Further details will follow in due course.

TREASURY**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[87481\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with (a) blood cancer and (b) other conditions which adversely affect an individual's immune system, do not face financial uncertainty as a result of the winding up of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the challenges presented by COVID-19 for those with cancer or individuals with conditions which adversely affect their immune system. The unprecedented current level of support for people's incomes is available for those who are living with cancer. This includes the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

The Chancellor announced on 12 May that the CJRS scheme would be extended until 31 October 2020.

The Government has relaxed national advice to those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), bringing it in line with the advice to those who are clinically vulnerable. If they are unable to work from home, they are able to return to work, provided their workplace is COVID-safe. If employers cannot provide a safe working environment, the CEV will continue to have access to an unprecedented package of financial support including an increase in the generosity of welfare payments worth a further £9.3bn according to Office for Budget Responsibility estimates. These changes also include a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit (UC) standard allowance and Working Tax Credit basic element, and a nearly £1 billion increase in support for renters through increases to the Local Housing Allowance rates for UC and Housing Benefit claimants.

Those who live or work in local lockdown areas who receive a notification that they need to shield will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for as long as the advice for them to shield remains in place (subject to the normal eligibility conditions). Individuals will be able to use this notification as evidence for their employer that they cannot work, including for SSP purposes.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[88931\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2020 to Question 83963 on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), if he will publish (a) the number of organisations that have used the CJRS who are also in receipt of other funding from the public purse, and (b) the total value of CJRS support received by those organisations.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC do not hold full data on which organisations have been supported by the public purse and are therefore unable to answer the questions submitted.

The latest published figures for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are set out below for information.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme launched on 20 April 2020. By midnight on 9 August :

- £34,700,000,000 has been claimed.
- 1,200,000* of employers are furloughing.
- 9,600,000** jobs furloughed.

*This is calculated by counting the number of CJRS claims from distinct PAYE schemes on employer reference (where the PAYE scheme reference is a proxy for a single employer)

**This is calculated as the sum of the maximum number of employments furloughed by any PAYE scheme across all claims by that scheme.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Third Sector

Rachael Maskell:

[\[87587\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the voluntary and community sector on extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

Government ministers and officials have been engaging regularly with civil society stakeholders to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the charity and voluntary sector. This includes discussions about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The Job Retention Scheme must be temporary, and the Government must ensure people can get back to work safely and get the UK economy up and running again.

The Government has set out a £750 million package of support for voluntary sector organisations providing key services and supporting vulnerable people during the pandemic.

The Government will continue to monitor the impact of Government support on businesses and voluntary sector organisations, public services, individuals and sectors.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus**Derek Twigg:** [\[86547\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will provide fiscal support to the live events industry to help safeguard jobs in that sector.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government recognises the disruption that necessary actions to combat Covid-19 are having on sectors such as the live events industry. The Government has announced unprecedented support for individuals and businesses during the pandemic. This includes Business Interruption Loans and Bounce-Back Loans and a yearlong business rates holiday for all eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The Government has further announced a £1.57 billion support package for eligible cultural and heritage organisations including theatres and live music venues, and a temporary reduction in VAT to support businesses and jobs in the hospitality and tourism industry, for example by reducing the cost of admission to attractions and events such as concerts, theatres, fairs and exhibitions.

■ Health Services: Staffordshire**Jonathan Gullis:** [\[86776\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the adequacy of funding for the NHS over winter 2020-21 in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

Steve Barclay:

The NHS is the Government's number one spending priority and this year we are part way through the largest cash increase to the NHS budget in its history, which will take the NHS budget in England to £148.5 billion in 2023/24. This year we have gone further in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic, which is why the Chancellor set out at the Summer Economic Update that the Treasury had approved £31.9 billion of extra support to health services in 2020/21. The Prime Minister subsequently announced an additional £3 billion package of support to manage NHS capacity pressures over winter- including to deliver the largest ever flu vaccination programme and to continue access to independent sector hospitals for NHS patients. This unprecedented support for the NHS will benefit patients and protect the public across the UK, including in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

As well as increasing day-to-day spending the Prime Minister has also announced £1.5 billion of additional capital funding for NHS hospitals in England this year, including towards improving A&E capacity. I am pleased to say that £4.3 million of this A&E funding has been allocated to the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust which serves patients in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

■ Hydrogen: Investment

Allan Dorans:

[\[86752\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to support private investment in the UK hydrogen economy.

Kemi Badenoch:

At Spring Budget 2020, the Chancellor announced a commitment of at least £800m for the deployment of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in the 2020s. These assets will play an important role in the production of hydrogen made from fossil fuels, otherwise known as blue hydrogen as they share the same infrastructure. .

Additionally, last year, the Government announced a £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund to incentivise future private sector investment in low carbon hydrogen, whilst in July this year, the Government published a response to a consultation on CCS business models, including for low carbon hydrogen production.

These measures will ensure that the UK economy is well-placed for future strategic decisions on the use of hydrogen, and that the private sector has sufficient confidence to provide investment.

■ Mortgages: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[87575\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of owner-occupiers of residential properties who have deferred mortgage payments during the covid-19 outbreak who (a) have received payments through the (i) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and (ii) Self- Employed Income Support Scheme, (b) have not received payments through either of those schemes and are not claiming benefits, (c) have not received payments through either of those schemes and are not eligible for benefits and (d) are still in paid work.

John Glen:

The Government announced the availability of the 3-month payment holiday in March. Since then over 2 million mortgages have been granted a payment holiday. The Government does not hold data regarding the employment status of those borrowers that have taken a payment holiday.

So far, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has helped 1.2 million employers across the UK furlough 9.6 million jobs, protecting people's livelihoods (as at midnight 16 August 2020). The value of the scheme is £35.4bn.

■ Mortgages: First Time Buyers

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[87576\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of the mortgage sector on the availability to first-time buyers of mortgages requiring a minimum deposit of (a) 10 per cent, (b) 15 per cent and (c) 20 per cent.

John Glen:

The Chancellor and I are in regular discussions with mortgage lenders regarding the availability of competitive mortgage products on the market (including high loan-to-value mortgages).

There has been a reduction in the number of products at all loan-to-value (LTV) levels as lenders have focused resources towards their existing customers requiring support. While this has limited the availability of higher LTV lending some products do remain available, and overall mortgage lending is recovering, with the number of mortgage approvals approaching pre-Covid levels.

Ultimately the availability of mortgage products are commercial decisions and lenders make decisions on their own risk appetite, considering factors such as market conditions and the funding they possess.

■ Mortgages: Older People**Christian Wakeford:**[\[86786\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to strengthen the Equalities Act 2010 to prevent discrimination by financial businesses in relation to home mortgages for prospective borrowers over the age of 75 who are nearing or post retirement age.

John Glen:

The requirements relating to lending beyond retirement age aim to protect consumers from carrying unaffordable debt into retirement. Where older consumers have the means to support repayments (as many do through employment, pensions, or other sources of income such as investments) the rules do not prevent them from accessing mortgages. The Equalities Act (2010) allows financial services providers, including mortgage lenders, to use an individual's age in designing, pricing and offering products. This includes allowing lenders to set age limits on customers to whom they will lend. The Government believes that it is important for financial services companies to be able to factor in a person's age in their assessment of risk, pricing, and willingness to lend if there is evidence to justify the different treatment. However, the Government is clear that mortgage lenders should not discriminate against borrowers due to their age, if they are able to demonstrate they can repay their mortgage over the course of a term and based on their income. The Government has worked with industry to ensure that products are available for older borrowers including the introduction of the Retirement Interest Only (RIO) mortgage, and the availability of Lifetime Equity Release products.

■ Pensions: Coronavirus**Henry Smith:**[\[87525\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer, how many people have accessed and transferred their pension early resulting in the recording of an unauthorised payment from their pension fund since the onset of the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government does not currently hold information about pension unauthorised payments since the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The scheme administrator of a registered pension scheme must tell HMRC when certain reportable events occur; reportable events include pension unauthorised payments.

The scheme administrator does this by completing and submitting the Event Report for a tax year. HMRC must receive the Event Report by 31 January after the end of the tax year to which the Event Report relates, so there is no data currently available.

Public Expenditure**Stephen Farry:**[\[86784\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the economic effects of the covid-19 pandemic, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of index-linking devolved Administrations' borrowing limits to reflect cost pressures.

Steve Barclay:

The devolved administrations receive a share of funding from UK Government borrowing through the Barnett formula. This demonstrates the significant benefit derived from pooling and sharing resources across our Union.

The UK Government has guaranteed that the devolved administrations will receive a minimum of £12.7bn of additional resource funding in 2020/21. This is an unprecedented guarantee of additional in-year funding.

The devolved administrations can also augment this funding through their own borrowing powers and Reserves, ensuring they have the tools to deliver their response to COVID-19 this year.

Remote Working: Tax Allowances**David Linden:**[\[88387\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that people working from home are aware of a tax rebate they can access from HMRC for (a) wifi, (b) computers and (c) other work related expenses such as WIFI and computers.

Jesse Norman:

The Government published a Written Ministerial Statement on 13 May 2020. This announced a new tax exemption for employees who are working from home as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, and need to purchase home office equipment and are reimbursed by the employer.

HMRC published new guidance on GOV.UK to raise awareness of the tax relief available to people working from home for home office equipment and other work-related expenses. HMRC have also included information in their publications such as the Employer Bulletin and guidance manuals, and are working directly with stakeholder groups and media outlets to help raise further awareness.

■ Revenue and Customs: Cumbernauld**Stuart C McDonald:** [88885]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when HMRC's lease on its office in Cumbernauld will expire.

Jesse Norman:

The lease for the HMRC office in Cumbernauld (Accounts Office) expires on 1 April 2021. Under the exit provisions of the STEPS PFI contract, HMRC have the option to extend the lease. In line with their locations strategy and to allow them to remain in the property until the Glasgow Regional Centre opens, HMRC are actively working on an extension and expect to issue an update soon.

HMRC will undertake to inform the Honourable Member of the outcome.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme**Taiwo Owatemi:** [88937]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants have been paid to furloughed workers who lost income due to an inability to carry out additional, part-time self-employment.

Jesse Norman:

The information requested is not available.

Statistics on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme are available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-august-2020> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-august-2020> respectively.

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions**Bob Blackman:** [86642]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate his Department has made of the potential contribution to economic growth of decarbonising the maritime sector.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury has not made an assessment.

In 2019 the Department for Transport published the Clean Maritime Plan, which identified the potential for clean economic growth in the UK as a result of the transition to zero emission shipping.

Alongside the Plan, the Department published an assessment of the value of potential economic opportunities from low and zero emission shipping. The assessment projected future global uptake of new technologies and estimated the supply chain and export opportunities for the UK from the transition to zero emission shipping.

■ Shipping: Investment

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86563\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support private investment in the UK maritime industry.

Kemi Badenoch:

The maritime sector plays a key role in the UK economy, responsible for up to 95% of our imports and exports. As much of the UK maritime sector is privately owned, our world-leading companies are well placed to seek investment opportunities through commercial means.

The government works closely with all parts of the UK maritime sector to identify the support they need to support their success and growth. In particular, the Department for International Trade works closely with the industry to promote the UK as an inward investment destination for the global maritime community.

■ Tax Avoidance

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88946\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to prevent tax avoidance by (a) corporations and (b) individuals.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is committed to tackling tax avoidance and evasion at all levels in order to ensure that everyone, no matter who they are, pays the right amount of tax at the right time.

Since 2010 the Government has taken significant action, including introducing over 120 new measures tackling tax avoidance, evasion and other forms of non-compliance. This action has secured and protected over £220 billion that would have otherwise gone unpaid, helping to reduce the avoidance tax gap from £3.7 billion in 2005 to 2006 to £1.7 billion in 2018 to 2019.

■ Tax Avoidance: South Yorkshire

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88948\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the annual cost of tax avoidance on South Yorkshire's economy and services.

Jesse Norman:

Tax avoidance contributes to the overall tax gap estimates HMRC publish. However, HMRC do not make regional estimates of the tax gap related to tax avoidance.

As part of the 2020 Measuring the Tax Gap publication, HMRC estimated that £1.7bn of tax liability was unpaid due to tax avoidance in the 2018-19 financial year, reduced from £3.7bn in 2005-06.

HMRC are committed to bearing down on tax avoidance wherever it occurs.

■ Tenants: Loans

Layla Moran:

[\[88927\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans his Department has to introduce a tenant hardship loan fund.

Steve Barclay:

The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support which is available to tenants, and we will continue to monitor closely the impacts of Covid19 for renters.

Notably, we have increased the local housing allowance rate to the 30th percentile. This increase will mean nearly £1bn of additional support for private renters claiming Universal Credit or Housing Benefit in 2020/21 and benefits over 1 million households, including those in work.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has offered support for business to pay staff salaries, enabling people to continue to pay their rent.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. As announced at the spending round for 2020/21, there is already £180m in Discretionary Housing Payments for Local Authorities to distribute for supporting renters with housing costs in the private and social rented sectors.

■ UK Government Investments

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86568\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that UKGI effectively represents his Department's interests, when advising board members of companies in which the Government has shareholdings.

John Glen:

UKGI represents the shareholder on a number of boards, acting as one of the board members.

UKGI and HM Treasury work closely together on a range of issues. HM Treasury has a Framework Document in place with UKGI, which sets out the objectives against which HM Treasury requires UKGI to deliver. Performance against these objectives is monitored via regular meetings between HM Treasury and UKGI. The Second Permanent Secretary of HM Treasury is also an ex-officio board member of UKGI. It should be noted that UKGI performs the shareholder role on a number of government-owned companies where the shareholder is the secretary of state of a department other than HM Treasury.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86572\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what register of interests members of UKGI are required to declare.

John Glen:

All employees of UKGI and UKGI's non-executive directors are required to sign an annual declaration of interests, setting out past employment or other fiduciary positions with any related party of UKGI; any external appointments, paid or unpaid, including directorships and trusteeships; any financial of other type of interest (for example, family) in a UKGI related party or an entity where UKGI may hold market-sensitive, non-public information; and finally, any other matters that the individual feels should be brought to the attention of UKGI's compliance officer. In this context, a UKGI related party is a third party organisation which has a direct or indirect relationship with UKGI that may include, for example, UKGI's portfolio entities, bidders for assets for which UKGI is currently managing a sales process, advisers and counter-parties involved in negotiations in which UKGI is involved.

UK Government Investments: Citigate Dewe Rogerson**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[87494\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much UKGI spent last year out of the public purse for the services of Citigate Dewe & Rogerson.

John Glen:

In the 12 months to 31 August 2020 UKGI spent £57,549 (excluding VAT) on the services of Citigate Dewe & Rogerson.

WALES**City Deals and Local Growth Deals: Wales****Scott Benton:**[\[905970\]](#)

What progress his Department has made on City and Growth deals in Wales.

Stuart Anderson:[\[905972\]](#)

What progress his Department has made on City and Growth deals in Wales.

David T C Davies:

The City and Growth Deals are progressing well. Cardiff has several exciting projects in the pipeline and I was pleased to approve and visit Swansea Bay's Pembroke Dock Marine and see the progress on Swansea's Digital District for myself. North Wales' Full Deal Agreement and Mid Wales' Head of Terms are also expected by the end of the year.

Coronavirus: Wales**Wayne David:**[\[905971\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the First Minister of Wales on levels of covid-19 in Wales.

Simon Hart:

We are supporting the Welsh Government as they manage localised lockdowns in Wales, including the current lockdown in the honourable Member's constituency of Caerphilly.

We are working more closely than ever before with the Welsh Government. We are meeting regularly to ensure a consistent response in tackling the outbreak, including meetings last week between the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the First Minister and myself.

Economic Situation: Wales**Jacob Young:**[\[905969\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support Wales' economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

David T C Davies:

This Department is focussed on jobs and growth in Wales. We're ensuring the four City & Growth Deals support the different regions. We are working with partners to improve transport infrastructure and digital connectivity. We are continuing to support our existing industry and looking for opportunities to develop new sectors, particularly on renewable energy.

WORK AND PENSIONS**Department for Work and Pensions: Staff****Neil O'Brien:**[\[87645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many members of staff in their Department have one or more of the words equality, diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT or race in their job title.

Mims Davies:

DWP has a central Wellbeing, Inclusion, Safety and Health team which sits within the corporate HR function. Because of the cross-cutting nature of the team's work it is not possible to split the numbers by diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT, or race alone.

In addition, there will be many colleagues throughout the Department involved in diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT, or race related activity, in both a formal and informal capacity.

Unfortunately, this information is not held centrally and would only be available at a disproportionate cost.

Department for Work and Pensions: Training**Neil O'Brien:**[\[86152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much the Department spent on unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

Mims Davies:

Much of the Unconscious Bias training undertaken in DWP is by E Learning and therefore is cost neutral. The number of people to have undertaken Unconscious Bias E Learning over the last five years is as follows

2016 - 6835

2017 - 12359

2018 - 14121

2019 - 17354

2020 - 6051

In addition, there is a face-to-face Unconscious Bias course which employees can attend. We hold no centralised records for courses that were held for 2016 and 2017. In 2018 384 people completed that learning at a cost of £60,000 and in 2019 336 people completed the learning at a cost of £52,500. Due to Covid no one has attended a face to face event in 2020.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Bosworth**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[86766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure the efficient roll out of the Kickstart scheme in Bosworth constituency.

Mims Davies:

We are pleased to confirm that the department is now processing many applications from across the UK, this is currently a clerical process, so reliable management information, particularly on geographical areas, is not yet available.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Staffordshire**Jonathan Gullis:**[\[86775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking with employers to help ensure as many young people as possible benefit from the Kickstart scheme in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

Mims Davies:

We are pleased to confirm that the department is now processing many applications from across the UK, this is currently a clerical process, so reliable management information, particularly on geographical areas, is not yet available.

■ National Insurance**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[86679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the time taken to issue national insurance numbers to applicants.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has continued to monitor all aspects of the National Insurance Number (NINo) process throughout recent months, as we continue to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on our services.

When applying for a NINo, all applicants are required to have their identity verified. For those applicants whose identity has already been verified by another UK Government Department, primarily the Home Office, their applications are dealt with by post. For those who have not had their identity verified, primarily EU/EEA nationals, the current process requires them to attend a face to face interview with DWP to verify their identity.

Due to COVID-19 and in line with government guidelines, the face to face interview process was suspended from 17th March 2020. The resource normally deployed in this area were redeployed to process the substantial number of benefit claims received during this period.

DWP re-instated a limited service for customers, who do not require a face to face interview, in June. Since then the average time taken to clear an application for a NINo from the point of application is received, to decision, has been:

June - 11.4 days

July - 5.4 days

August - 4.5 days

It is not possible, due to the requirement to examine customers' ID documents, to offer a virtual service. However, we are working on a digital solution that should enable us to restart the process incrementally from the end of September 2020.

■ NHS: Employment Schemes**Seema Malhotra:**[\[88873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many sector-based work academy partnerships are in place between the NHS and JobCentre Plus; and how many job seekers have been supported through such partnerships since they were established.

Mims Davies:

The information requested is not available.

■ Pensions: Advisory Services**Henry Smith:**[\[87527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people have booked a Pension Wise guidance session since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Guy Opperman:

Between March 1st and September 9th 2020, the number of Pension Wise guidance sessions booked totalled 64,221.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Sir John Hayes:

[\[88813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on the disability green paper.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department will be bringing forward a Green Paper on health and disability support, focusing on how the welfare system can better meet the needs of claimants with disabilities and health conditions. The Green Paper will be strongly influenced by the views of disabled people and representatives from disability organisations, drawing on the significant engagement we have conducted and which will continue, albeit through different channels, over the Autumn.

Given the necessary focus on the departmental response to COVID-19, we are working to a longer timescale than previously anticipated but we remain committed to publishing in the coming months.

■ Support for Mortgage Interest: Coronavirus

Alan Brown:

[\[88896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what changes she has made to the qualifying period for support for mortgage interest in response to the covid-19 outbreak; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The Department has no plans to amend the qualifying period for Support for Mortgage Interest.

Home owners experiencing difficulties with mortgage repayments because of COVID-19 should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss what support might be available.

■ Unemployment and Vacancies

Seema Malhotra:

[\[88319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her latest estimate is of the (a) job vacancy rate and (b) unemployment rate in each region and nation of the UK.

Mims Davies:

The official statistics on vacancies are not available for each region and nation of the UK. However, [experimental statistics on online job adverts](#) are available from ONS at a regional level. These statistics are provided by ONS in partnership with Adzuna (an online job search engine). Statistics on regional unemployment can be found [here](#).

■ Universal Credit**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[88358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 72774 on Universal Credit, what estimate her Department has made of the cost of providing information on the number of payments of financial redress her Department has made since March 2019 to claimants who moved from legacy benefits to universal credit on her Department's advice and became worse off.

Will Quince:

When considering our response to PQ 72774, the Department undertook a sampling exercise that indicated an estimated cost in excess of £850 for providing the requested data. For this reason, the Department considered that the information could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Coronavirus Update

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): [\[HCWS452\]](#)

I want to update on the latest local restrictions. The latest evidence indicates that the Covid-19 infection rate is beginning to rise across the country. It is therefore now vitally important that Government takes decisive action to limit any further spread and reduce the likelihood of a further national lockdown of the type that was necessary earlier this year. We will continue to review the restrictions to ease or strengthen measures when necessary and based on the scientific evidence.

Changes to Leicester restrictions

Further changes are also being made to the Leicester restrictions. As of Tuesday 15 August, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 were amended to enable the opening of casinos, indoor skating rinks, bowling alleys, indoor play areas, exhibition halls and conference centres. Socially distanced indoor performances were also able to resume, and remaining restrictions on certain close contact services (treatments on the face, such as eyebrow threading or make-up application) were lifted. These changes meant that Leicester is subject to the same business restrictions as the majority of England and guidance was updated accordingly.

The ban on inter-household gatherings in private homes and gardens remain in place to control the spread of the virus.

The government will continue to review the remaining restrictions in Leicester at least every 14 days, with the next review due to take place before 24 September.

Additional restrictions in Birmingham

In the West Midlands, the increase in Covid-19 infection rates can be seen particularly in Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell, where incidence rates and positivity rates have increased significantly. Transmission appears to be associated with household transmission, travel hospitality venues and other social mixing.

Given the broad transmission routes, we have considered and agreed the request of local authorities to restrict household mixing to try and curb the spread of the virus in the Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell areas of the West Midlands. Restrictions on households mixing within private homes and gardens was enacted in secondary legislation and came into effect on Tuesday 15 September. Residents in these areas should not socialise with people that they do not live with, either inside or outside. This was taken in consultation with local leaders, who are working hard to keep the transmission rates down.

Publicly available Government guidance on Gov.uk is being updated to ensure it fully corresponds with the new Regulations. Sector bodies will also produce updated guidance where relevant.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ High Streets update

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): [\[HCWS453\]](#)

I am today informing the House that I have laid a statutory instrument that will extend the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeit a lease due to the non-payment of rent to the end of the year.

The moratorium was established via Section 82 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and was due to expire on 30 September. It has now been extended by three months and will expire on 31 December 2020. This extension will help provide businesses and employees with certainty and protect vital jobs, particularly in the retail and hospitality sectors.

This is being accompanied by an amendment to Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery measures led by the Ministry of Justice. Accompanying restrictions on the service of statutory demands and winding-up petitions, implemented through the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020, are currently in place until 30 September, and we are working closely across Government to consider a similar extension to these.

Since March, Government has implemented a range of measures to support commercial property tenants and landlords. The objective of these measures was to preserve tenants' businesses through the Covid-19 lockdown and to give time and space to landlords and tenants to agree reasonable adjustments to rent and lease terms, including terms for the payment of accumulated rent arrears.

This is a temporary measure being extended; however government recognises that it cannot go on indefinitely. We recognise the impact that this extension has on landlords, therefore we expect both sides of the sector to use this time to negotiate and government will intervene further if necessary.

This extension will provide the businesses with certainty as they scale up their recovery from Covid-19 and will ensure that sectors most acutely impacted by the closure of non-essential retail can benefit from the Christmas trading period.

This is not a rent holiday. Government is clear that landlords and tenants should be coming together to negotiate in good faith where a tenant is unable to pay in full, using the principles set out in the voluntary Code of Practice we published in June which recommends that those tenants who can pay should do so while those landlords who are able to grant concessions should do so. This Code of Practice and approach was supported by a wide range of sector bodies representing tenants and landlords.

England, Northern Ireland and Wales are covered by the protection from forfeiture in the Coronavirus Act. Section 82 relates to England and Wales, and the Welsh Government

have already laid a statutory instrument to extend the measures for an additional three months. Section 83 relates to Northern Ireland, who are currently considering a similar extension. The Scottish Government passed separate emergency legislation to implement similar measures.