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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Staff

Neil O'Brien:

[\[87658\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, 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.

Michael Ellis:

No job titles in the Attorney General's Office (AGO), the Government Legal Department (GLD), and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPIS) include the words equality, diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT or race.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) employs 6260 members of staff and 21 members of staff within the Department have one or more of the words equality, diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT or race in their job title.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has no staff with these words in their job titles, however, one of the SFO's Strategic Objectives is to build an effective and inclusive workforce, treating their staff fairly and with respect and dignity. There are also a large number of people in the organisation engaged on improving equality, diversity and inclusion across the office.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of compliance of large companies with redundancy and recruitment regulatory frameworks during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

All employers must continue to comply with the law on redundancy.

Any redundancy process should be fair and reasonable, with appropriate equalities considerations. When making redundancies, employers must abide by the law which includes giving a notice period and consulting staff before a final decision is reached. If a company has failed to adequately consult its employees before making them redundant, it may be possible for employees to apply to an Employment Tribunal for a Protective Award.

When recruiting, employers should be fair and objective in their selection of successful candidates and must not discriminate unlawfully, for example on grounds of race, sex or disability.

The Government has also introduced new legislation which commenced on 31 July to ensure that furloughed employees who are subsequently made redundant receive statutory redundancy pay, statutory notice pay, unfair dismissal compensation and pay for short-time working based on the employee's normal pay, rather than their furlough pay (potentially 80% of their normal wage). The Government has always urged employers to do the right thing and not seek to disadvantage furloughed employees who are facing redundancy.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that companies that have received funding from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme comply with employment law on recruitment and redundancy processes.

Paul Scully:

Our guidance to employers using the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) makes clear that employees still have the same rights at work. They must continue to comply with employment and equalities laws when using the scheme, including in relation to recruitment, redundancy and dismissal.

Employers should always be fair and objective in their recruitment processes. Provided they do not discriminate unlawfully, for example on grounds of race, sex or disability, they are free to use the recruitment methods that they consider best suit their needs.

Any redundancy process should be fair and reasonable, with appropriate equalities considerations. Employees with the necessary qualifying service who believe that they have been unfairly selected for redundancy, or that the redundancy was unfair in some other way, may be able to complain to an employment tribunal.

The Government has also introduced new legislation which commenced on 31 July to ensure that furloughed employees who are subsequently made redundant receive statutory redundancy pay, statutory notice pay, unfair dismissal compensation and pay for short-time working based on the employee's normal pay, rather than their furlough pay (potentially 80% of their normal wage). The Government has always urged employers to do the right thing and not seek to disadvantage furloughed employees who are facing redundancy.

■ Coronavirus: Research

Allan Dorans:

[\[88388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support research into the efficacy of a covid-19 vaccine in older people.

Amanda Solloway:

The University of Oxford / Astra Zeneca Phase 3 trial includes arms that specifically looks at safety and efficacy of the vaccine in those aged between 56 – 69 and over

70. For these groups, researchers are assessing the immune response to the vaccine in people of different ages, to find out if there is variation in how well the immune system responds in older people. Other vaccine developers that the Government are working with may also decide to include specific groups such as these in their trials.

In addition to the work that vaccine developers are undertaking, the Government has funded the NHS Registry, developed by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This national registry is encouraging people who may be disproportionately affected by COVID-19, such as older people, older people with underlying health conditions and people from different ethnic groups, to volunteer for clinical trials. This includes supporting the development of communications materials to provide information on taking part in COVID-19 vaccine trials via the NIHR website (Be Part of Research).

Allan Dorans:

[\[88389\]](#)

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

Amanda Solloway:

Understanding the biological mechanisms of COVID-19 and its longer-term impacts is a priority topic in UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) research response. In partnership with National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), UKRI has announced an £8.4 million project that will investigate the physical and mental health impacts of hospitalised patients. The Post-Hospitalisation COVID-19 (PHOSP-COVID) study, led by Professor Chris Brightling from the University of Leicester, aims to recruit 8,000 patients from across the UK. This will make it one of the world's largest studies into the long-term health consequences of COVID-19. Results from the study will inform the development of new and better measures to treat and rehabilitate patients hospitalised with COVID-19.

Additional supported work includes a £0.6 million award to Dr James Peters at Imperial College London for the mechanisms underlying the excessive inflammatory response developed in a subset of COVID-19 patients, and a £0.8 million award to Professor John Greenwood Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who will use magnetic resonance imaging to diagnose and understand cardiac injuries in COVID-19 patients. These awards were made through the UKRI-NIHR COVID-19 Rapid Response Rolling Call.

■ Employment: Contracts

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support staff who are being forced to renegotiate contracts when the furlough scheme ends.

Paul Scully:

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

Once agreed, they form a legally binding contract of employment. While it is always open to either party to seek to renegotiate the terms of the contract, if the employer changes any of the terms without the employee's agreement, the employee may be entitled to seek legal redress. We expect all employers, to treat employees fairly. Depending on the extent and likely impact of the proposed changes, employers should meet with affected employees or their trade union representatives, and explain their case for making the proposed change.

A guidance document which contains more information on the law in this area is available at www.gov.uk/browse/working. Employees may wish to seek independent legal advice, perhaps from their local Citizens Advice Bureau or law centre, if they are unclear on their contractual position.

■ Horizon 2020**Allan Dorans:****[88390]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to prepare for the UK potentially not associating to Horizon Europe after the transition period.

Amanda Solloway:

In tandem with our negotiations to associate to EU programmes we, as a responsible government, are developing alternative schemes to support international research and innovation collaboration. If we do not formally associate to Horizon Europe, we will implement ambitious alternatives as quickly as possible from January 2021 and address the funding gap. We will launch an ambitious new Discovery Fund offering sizeable grants over long periods of time to early, mid and late-career researchers, whether already in the UK or coming here from anywhere in the world, to pursue ground-breaking research. We will scale up and enhance prestigious domestic schemes, providing funding to allow UK researchers and innovators to seize opportunities and to allow our institutions to attract and retain international talent and we will make funding available to allow UK partners to participate in European schemes open to third countries.

■ Nuclear Liabilities Financing Assurance Board**Caroline Lucas:****[88284]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his plans are for the future of the Nuclear Liabilities Financing Assurance Board; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is prepared to support new nuclear projects in the years ahead, if these projects can be delivered at a competitive price that represents value for money for the taxpayer. If we were to take a new nuclear project forward, we would look at appropriate methods to scrutinise proposals for the Funded Decommissioning Programme submitted by the prospective operator.

■ **Sellafield****Caroline Lucas:**[\[88285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the incident reported at Sellafield on 14 August 2020 that involved Sellafield Ltd management calling in experts from Explosive Ordnance Disposal to stabilise toxic chemicals discovered inappropriately stored near the Magnox reprocessing line; what danger was posed to the (a) licensed nuclear site workforce and (b) community near to Sellafield outside the security fence; and what steps he is taking to ensure that Sellafield Ltd improves the safety of the on-site management of toxic and potentially explosive chemicals as a consequence of that incident.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As part of routine inspection of chemicals being stored inside a dedicated store (within the Magnox Reprocessing Facility) at Sellafield, a chemical was found to have changed in appearance. The UK's independent regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), were in regular contact with the site as they managed this incident and safely disposed of the materials, in accordance with their established procedures.

At no point were workers at the site, or the community near to Sellafield, at any risk as a result of this material or the manner in which it was disposed of. The Magnox Reprocessing Facility was evacuated as a precaution during disposal.

The ONR were content with Sellafield Ltd's actions in response and will continue to monitor progress with arrangements for managing waste chemicals across the site, including inspecting the operator's plans for their disposal or safe storage.

The ONR's inspectors are following up on this incident and will determine if further regulatory action is required.

Caroline Lucas:[\[88286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the incident reported at Sellafield on 14 August 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Sellafield Limited Board of Inquiry report into an incident involving inappropriately managed toxic chemicals discovered on 3 October 2017 at the Sellafield Analytical Services Laboratory (ASL), which was reported in February 2018.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Following the incident in 2017, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) issued an enforcement letter to Sellafield Ltd. The letter required the organisation to review and improve their arrangements for managing waste chemicals across the site, including implementing a plan for their disposal or safe storage. Given the large quantity and variety of chemicals held on the site, this has been a significant and complex undertaking.

The Board of Inquiry into the events of October 2017 made several recommendations, which Sellafield Ltd undertook to implement. The ONR have maintained oversight of Sellafield Ltd's progress against the identified actions and improvement plan, through ongoing regulatory activity. The ONR are content with the progress that is continuing to be made on this matter and will maintain their activities and oversight to ensure that Sellafield Ltd's improvements in chemical management on the site are fully realised.

Caroline Lucas:[\[88287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the incident reported at Sellafield on 14 August 2020, what reports his Department has received of the effectiveness of the implementation of the safety changes proposed in the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) Assessment of the Sellafield Ltd Analytical Services Second Cycle Long Term Periodic Review, Project Assessment Report ONR-SDFW-PAR-2017-007, dated June 2017; and what matters remain outstanding.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Following the incident in 2017, the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) issued an enforcement letter to Sellafield Ltd. The letter required the regulator to review and improve their arrangements for managing waste chemicals across the site, including implementing a plan for their disposal or safe storage. Given the large quantity and variety of chemicals held on the site, this has been a significant and complex undertaking.

The ONR have maintained oversight of Sellafield Ltd's progress against the identified actions and its improvement plan through a Regulatory Issue. They are currently content with the progress being made on this matter and will continue with their work to ensure that Sellafield Ltd's improvements in chemical management on the site are realised fully.

As a result of the increased focus on chemicals by Sellafield Ltd, during a routine inspection a potentially unstable chemical was identified. Action was taken to make the site safe and ultimately remove the chemical from the site. The potential exists for further such chemicals to be identified while Sellafield Ltd implements its improvement plan.

The ONR are satisfied that Sellafield Ltd's response to this event was appropriate. The ONR's inspectors are following up on this incident to determine if any further regulatory action is needed, in accordance with their established arrangements.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) reported this incident and the subsequent regulatory activity to the Department as part of its regular monthly and quarterly reporting requirements pertaining to regulatory activity and safety at Sellafield. This reporting is regularly reviewed by officials and is further enhanced by regular engagement between the Department, the ONR and the NDA.

■ Cabinet Office: Ethnic Groups

Apsana Begum: [\[87691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Government departments can apply to the Living Wage Foundation to become a Living Wage Accredited Employer; and if he will make a statement.

Apsana Begum: [\[87692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Government departments are able to specify that wages of at least the Real Living Wage as determined by the Living Wage Foundation must be paid to all workers employed under Facility Management contract let by that Department; and if he will make a statement.

Apsana Begum: [\[87696\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the legal employers of all categories of civil servants by Government department.

Apsana Begum: [\[87697\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 October 2019 to Question 292944 on Cabinet Office: Ethnic Groups, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his Department's employment practices with monitoring requirements set out in the EHRC Statutory Code of Practice on Employment.

Apsana Begum: [\[87698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 October 2019 to Question 292944 on Cabinet Office: Ethnic Groups, what recent assessment he has made of equal opportunities for people who have identified as BAME in his Department's promotion system.

Apsana Begum: [\[87699\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 4 October 2019 to Question 292944 on Cabinet Office: Ethnic Groups, whether his Department has since collected equality data on promotions in his Department.

Apsana Begum:

[\[87700\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of staff who applied for promotion opportunities run by the Government Recruitment Service between 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and who identified as (a) BAME and (b) White were successful by each grade; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

Cabinet Office employment practices are in compliance with the monitoring requirements set out in the EHRC Statutory code of practice of employment. All permanent external recruitment within the Cabinet Office is based on the Civil Service recruitment principles which is done on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition. The information on promotions is not held centrally.

The Crown is the legal employer of civil servants but, practically, as a result of delegation, the employment relationship for all civil servants is with their department or agency.

Government departments have delegated authority to set pay arrangements to allow them to put in place reward arrangements for civil servants that best suit their business needs.

The Government will always award contracts on the basis of value for money for the taxpayer. Employers must pay at least the National Minimum Wage, or the National Living Wage for workers over 25.

■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

Apsana Begum:

[\[87694\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether officials in (a) his Department, and (b) the wider Civil Service have been advised not to destroy covid-19-related records that could be considered relevant in the event of a potential public inquiry.

Julia Lopez:

Advice and guidance on record keeping in the context of Covid-19 was first issued to officials in the Cabinet Office on 25 March. Staff were asked to “ensure that the record of what we do at this time, which is of vital importance to our nation, is preserved for future inquiries, and valuable knowledge is preserved.” Each department is responsible for its own record keeping processes.

DEFENCE

■ Saudi Arabia: Military Aid

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[89806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Saudi Arabian pilots trained in the UK have undertaken missions for the Royal Saudi Air Force in the war in Yemen.

James Heappey:

The utilisation of trained Royal Saudi Air Force aircrew is not monitored by or otherwise confirmed to the UK.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Training****Neil O'Brien:**[\[86158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much the Department spent on unconscious bias training in each of the last five years.

Mr John Whittingdale:

All staff are expected to complete Diversity and Inclusion e-learning on an annual basis. This includes modules on unconscious bias. All e-learning is free of charge to staff as it is covered by the department's annual payment to access Civil Service Learning.

In addition to this DCMS spent £7,500+VAT in f/y 2019/20 on face to face unconscious bias training.

■ Digital Technology**Chi Onwurah:**[\[83795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether (a) digital inclusion, (b) online harms and (c) algorithmic bias will be in the scope of the Government's forthcoming Digital Strategy.

Caroline Dinéage:

As I have previously announced, the forthcoming Digital Strategy will set out how the Government wants to maximise the benefits of a tech-led recovery to Covid-19, whilst coherently addressing the challenges it poses. The Strategy will focus on growth and using tech to power us out of the recession, to drive productivity and to create jobs in all parts of our economy. For the aspirations of this Strategy to be delivered successfully, we recognise people will need the capability and confidence to get the most out of an increasingly digital world. As part of the development process of the Digital Strategy, we are considering the most suitable ways to embed inclusion objectives to ensure that all citizens can benefit from a digitally-driven society.

On online harms, we published the initial government response to the Online Harms White Paper in February, which set out the direction of travel, and we will publish the Full Government Response later this year. We are engaging experts, regulators, and industry over the coming months to ensure that the regulatory landscape is coherent, coordinated and effective.

EDUCATION**■ Assessments: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[87597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with Ofqual on the effect of the lockdown due to the covid-19 outbreak on end-of-year assessments.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to ensuring that students taking exams in 2021 receive the qualifications they deserve, and that next year's exam series proceeds fairly and efficiently and commands public confidence.

Exams and assessments are the best and fairest way of judging students' performance, and we expect next year's exam series to go ahead. However, we recognise that students due to sit exams and assessments next year will have experienced disruption to their education due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, we have been working closely with Ofqual, the exam boards and groups representing teachers, schools, and colleges to consider our approach to exams and other assessments next year.

Ofqual has already consulted on a range of possible adaptations to GCSE, AS and A level exams and assessments next year on a subject-by-subject basis, and has announced some changes that will reduce pressure on teaching time, and help ensure those young people taking exams next year have the same opportunities to progress as the students before them.

■ Department for Education: Staff**Neil O'Brien:**[\[87646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Nick Gibb:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Harborough to the answer I gave on 10 September 2020 to Question [83930](#).

■ Educational Visits: Coronavirus**Scott Benton:**[\[88413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the school travel sector on options for the safe resumption of school visits during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department continues to work with representatives of the tour industry, devolved administrations, trade unions as well as other Government Departments.

The guidance for full school opening enables schools to resume educational day visits but continues to advise against UK overnight educational residential visits. This advice will remain under review and will be updated in line with guidance from Public Health England, the Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The guidance can be viewed at:

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

■ Families: Finance

Tulip Siddiq: [88368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to paragraph 2.64 of Budget 2020 on research to support vulnerable children, what progress has been made on delivering the £2.5 million for research and developing best practice around the integration of services for families, including family hubs.

Tulip Siddiq: [88369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many family hubs (a) have opened and (b) are planned to open as a result of the additional support announced in the March 2020 budget.

Tulip Siddiq: [88370]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on integrating family hubs with the Troubled Families Programme.

Vicky Ford:

We will be launching the procurement process for research and developing best practice on integration of services for families, including family hubs, shortly.

The number of family hubs in each locality is determined by local councils in consultation with their local communities.

Local authorities and their partners have the flexibility to deliver the Troubled Families Programme in the way that best meets their local needs. The programme's Early Help System Guide supports local areas to re-configure their services around families and encourages innovative, multi-agency practice, which could include integrated hubs based in the community.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Rachael Maskell: [89774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will enable and support local authorities to deliver an equivalent to the National Tutoring Programme.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is an ambitious scheme that will provide additional, targeted support for those pupils who need the most help to catch up and

will seek to stimulate a longer term supply of high quality and low cost tutoring for the future.

The Department's delivery partners for the NTP, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Teach First, have set out the processes for delivering and accessing tuition support for the academic year. Information is set out on the NTP website: <https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/faqs>. Both the EEF and Teach First have a wealth of knowledge and experience in education and the education training sector. They will work to scale up the provision of tutoring whilst remaining strongly focussed on issues of quality and accessibility.

If local authorities wish to become an approved tuition partner to provide high quality tutoring, they can apply through the open competition overseen by the EEF. Local authority maintained schools, like all schools, will be able to see the approved list of tuition partners available to them, additionally, if they meet the necessary criteria, they will also be able to apply for an academic mentor. The Department will work with our delivery partners and other partners, including local authorities, to ensure that there is as good an offer as possible across all regions.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[87600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he is providing to pupils who are not able to attend school due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Between May and August, the Department delivered over 220,000 laptops and tablets to children who would not otherwise have access, as part of over £100 million invested to support remote education and access to online social care.

The Department is now supplementing this support by making available an initial 150,000 additional devices in the event that face to face schooling becomes disrupted as a result of local COVID-19 restrictions. This scheme will enable schools to support disadvantaged children in years 3 to year 11 who cannot otherwise access devices. Schools will also be able to order devices for disadvantaged children across all year groups who are shielding as a result of official or medical advice, all year groups who attend hospital schools and those completing their Key Stage 4 at a further education college.

The Department has also provided over 50,000 4G wireless routers to support disadvantaged children with internet connectivity. These routers come with free data for the autumn term and will allow local authorities and academy trusts to support children who may have their education and care disrupted because of official COVID-19 restrictions or disruption to face to face contact. In partnership with BT, the Department has also launched a service to provide children and young people free access to BT Wi-Fi hotspots.

The Department is also working with the major telecommunications companies to improve internet connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable families who rely on a

mobile internet connection. We are piloting an approach where mobile network operators are providing temporary access to free additional data offering families more flexibility to access the resources that they need the most.

We expect all schools to have remote education contingency plans in place by the end of September. The Department published guidance on Thursday 2 July that sets out what is expected from schools for their remote education provision:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#section-3-curriculum-behaviour-and-pastoral-support>

We have published a comprehensive range of advice and guidance to support schools. This includes examples of teaching practice during coronavirus, which provides an opportunity for schools to learn from each other's approaches to remote education:

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

The guidance also includes examples of how schools can support pupils without internet access by, for example, providing physical work packs, which can be accessed here:

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

The Department has also supported sector-led initiatives like Oak National Academy, which launched on 20 April. By 12 July, 4.7 million unique users had accessed the Oak National Academy website and 16.1 million lessons had been viewed. The Department has made £4.84 million available for Oak National Academy both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20, and then for the 2020-21 academic year to provide video lessons for Reception up to Year 11. This will include specialist content for pupils with SEND.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[87628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to allocate additional funding for schools to spend on overtime for staff for the implementation of covid-19 safety measures.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[87636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of whether additional funding is required for schools to implement deep cleaning of school facilities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

On 2 July, the Government published guidance for the full opening of schools, including a Public Health England endorsed system of controls which, when

implemented alongside the school's own risk assessment, create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. This guidance can be viewed at:

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

As stated in the guidance, schools should make use of their existing resources when welcoming all children back for the autumn. Schools may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly, to welcome back all pupils at the start of the autumn term. It is important that planning builds in the need to avoid unnecessary and unmanageable workload burdens.

We are providing additional funding to schools to cover unavoidable costs incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak between March and July that cannot be met from their existing resources. Schools were eligible to claim for: increased premises related costs associated with keeping schools open over the Easter and summer half term holidays; support for free school meals for eligible children who are not in school, where schools are not using the national voucher scheme; and additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements.

Schools have also continued to receive their core funding allocations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Following last year's Spending Round, school budgets are rising by £2.6 billion in 2020-21, £4.8 billion in 2021-22 and £7.1 billion in 2022-23, compared to 2019-20.

Stephen Morgan:

[87637]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he plans to provide to (a) staff and (b) pupils in response to the reported increase in covid-19 cases.

Nick Gibb:

On 2 July the Department published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term. The guidance can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

This includes the public health advice schools must follow to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission. The public health advice in the guidance makes up a Public Health England (PHE) endorsed 'system of controls', building on the hierarchy of protective measures that have been used throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. When implemented in line with a revised risk assessment, these measures create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced. Measures include minimising contact between groups and maintaining distance where possible, encouraging regular handwashing, and enhanced cleaning.

The guidance also includes advice to schools on responding to any suspected cases of COVID-19. All staff and pupils should be tested if they develop COVID-19

symptoms, and every school and college that has been attended by someone who tests positive will receive direct support and advice from their local PHE health protection team.

The Department have asked every school to plan for the possibility of local restrictions and how they will ensure continuity of education in exceptional circumstances where there is some level of restriction applied to education or childcare in a local area. The Department of Health and Social Care has published an overview of the tiers of restriction for education and childcare, to be implemented only where absolutely necessary, in its contain framework. This makes clear that we anticipate that education and childcare will usually remain fully open to all. This can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>.

Guidance has also been published on how schools can plan for tier 2 local restrictions due to the operational challenges that schools could experience. This can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions/how-schools-can-plan-for-tier-2-local-restrictions>.

Stephen Morgan:

[87638]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) pupils and (b) teaching staff have access to appropriate (i) equipment, (ii) sanitiser and (iii) personal protective equipment in response to the reported rise in covid-19 cases.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to publish comprehensive guidance to all schools and colleges on a system of controls which, when implemented, create an inherently safer system where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced. The guidance can be found here:

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

The majority of staff in schools and colleges will not require personal protective equipment (PPE) beyond what they would normally need for their work. Additional PPE is only needed when in close contact with those with COVID-19 symptoms. Guidance on the use of PPE in education settings is available here:

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

Schools and colleges are responsible for sourcing their own PPE and cleaning products. In addition to existing procurement routes, the Government has launched the Crown Commercial Service safer working supplies website and promoted public sector buying organisations through which schools and colleges can access PPE and cleaning products.

To further build resilience across the education sector to respond to any suspected cases arising in schools and colleges, the Department has worked with the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver a one off distribution of PPE to them. The delivery contained clinical face masks, aprons, gloves and visors, as well as the hand sanitiser needed to put on and take off PPE. This PPE has been provided free of charge by the DHSC to be used for COVID-19 related purposes in line with the Department's guidance.

Tom Hunt:

[88405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure schools are covid-19 secure during winter 2020-21 when ensuring ventilation in classrooms and outdoor socialising for pupils could become more difficult.

Nick Gibb:

On 2 July we published guidance to help schools prepare for all pupils, in all year groups, to return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. The guidance can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>.

The above guidance sets out a 'system of controls' which provides a framework for school leaders to put in place a range of proportionate protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. Measures include minimising contacts between groups and maintaining distance where possible, encouraging regular handwashing, and enhanced cleaning.

This includes advice that once the school is in operation, it is important to ensure good ventilation and maximising this wherever possible, for example, by opening windows and propping open doors, as long as they are not fire doors, where safe to do so (bearing in mind safeguarding in particular). Arrangements for ventilation will vary in each setting based on individual circumstances.

Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation.htm>.

Whilst schools are encouraged to utilise outdoor space, this may be less practical throughout the winter months. The use of outdoor spaces is one element of the protective measures that schools have available to limit the transmission of coronavirus. There cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and school leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Animals: Markets****David Mundell:**[\[88253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that wet markets do not reopen.

Victoria Prentis:

'Wet markets' sell a range of fresh produce and can be found across the globe, including farmers markets and seafood markets in the UK. They are an important source of food and income for many people globally. The Government recognises that markets selling live animals and meat are a high risk environment for the transmission of zoonotic diseases if they are not subject to high standards of biosecurity and hygiene. We therefore agree with the World Health Organization that markets should close if these standards are not met.

The Government is fully committed to tackling the environmental drivers of pandemics, including by reversing global biodiversity loss, tackling unsustainable and illegal wildlife trade, and driving up standards in food production and food safety around the world. We will continue to support swift policy interventions where these are shown to be effective in mitigating future risk of zoonotic diseases and are underpinned by sound evidence.

■ Bridleways**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[88250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the preservation of bridleways and equestrian rights of way.

Rebecca Pow:

Local authorities are responsible for the management and maintenance of public rights of way. They are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan to plan improvements to the rights of way network in their area, which is usually available on the authority's website. This must include an assessment of the local rights of way including the condition of the network.

■ Furs: Sales**Christian Wakeford:**[\[88423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to hold a consultation on banning the sale of fur in the UK.

Christian Wakeford:[\[88424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of banning the sale of fur in the UK at the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Totnes on 30 June 2020, PQ UIN 62631.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-22/62631]

Shellfish: Dee Estuary**Mark Tami:****[88249]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will hold discussions with Natural Resources Wales on enabling it to refuse Dee Estuary cockle fisheries licences to applicants who have not made use of a previous such licence issued to them in order to increase availability of such licences for new applicants.

Victoria Prentis:

Whilst the Dee Cockle fishery straddles England and Wales, it is managed by Natural Resources Wales, and therefore comes under the auspices of the Welsh Government.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**Bahrain: Political Prisoners****Andy Slaughter:****[88254]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports of the treatment of political prisoners (a) Sheikh Zuhair Ashoor, (b) Mohamed Sarhan, (c) Mohamed Fakrawi, (d) Ali Al-Wazir and (e) Sadiq Al-Qasra in Jau Prison, Bahrain, if he will make representations to his Bahraini counterpart on the (i) conditions in detention and (ii) treatment of those prisoners.

James Cleverly:

The Government of Bahrain has made clear that access to appropriate medical care for those in detention continues to be guaranteed, which means under normal circumstances that any prisoner wishing to see a doctor is taken to the prison clinic, with referral to specialist facilities where required; but that as part of Bahrain's COVID-19 precautions, all initial medical consultations now take place via video calls. Where necessary, physical appointments with external medical specialists continue to be available, although, in line with guidance issued by the World Health Organization, prisoners seeing external specialists are required to isolate for 10 days in a separate detention facility before returning to prison ensuring the safety of both patients and medical staff. We welcome these assurances from the Government of Bahrain, urge continued transparency and would encourage those with any concerns about treatment in detention to raise them with the appropriate Bahraini human rights oversight body.

■ Developing Countries: Children

Owen Thompson:

[\[84707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will publish a response to the 10 recommendations set out in UNICEF UK's September 2020 report entitled A Future at Risk.

Wendy Morton:

I welcome the publication of the UNICEF UK report 'A Future at Risk', it presents a comprehensive set of recommendations and a rich set of resources to highlight the negative impact COVID 19 has had on education and health in developing countries. Many of the recommendations highlighted in the report are closely aligned with FCDO priorities as we build back from COVID-19.

The UK is committed to ensuring children around the world return to school when it is safe to do so. We have adapted our bilateral education programmes in 18 countries in response to the pandemic and have stepped up funding for education including a £5 million uplift to the Education Cannot Wait fund for emergency education in fragile contexts, and over £5m of new funding to UNHCR to enable over 5500 teachers to provide vital education for children in 10 refugee-hosting countries over the crucial next seven months. We are also getting behind UNICEF's Reopening Better Campaign, both globally and in country.

The UK is committed to supporting developing countries' health systems to respond to COVID-19 and to achieving the health-related SDGs. We will do this with a particular focus on ending the preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children by 2030 and also through increasing UK leadership on malaria. The UK remains committed to preventing and treating malnutrition, including work with the Government of Japan to ensure the 2021 Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit is a success, and advancing and defending comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights. The UK is actively working through the ACT-Accelerator and its partners to realise the aim of ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests, once available, are accessible to all who need them.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[88378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September to Question 82263, since the launch of the UK Aid Direct funding round how (a) many applications have been received, (b) many applications have been approved, and (c) much money has been dispersed to date.

Wendy Morton:

UK Aid Direct Round 5 comprises two parts: rapid access funding open to existing UK Aid Direct grant holders able to respond immediately to the impacts of COVID-19; and a standard competitive funding round open to new proposals to address the longer-term impacts.

45 existing grant holders applied for rapid access funding. 33 were successful and are in the process of signing Accountable Grant amendments. £272,477 has been disbursed to date.

The standard part of Round 5 closed for concept note applications on 30 June 2020. In total, 649 eligible applications were received and 82 civil society organisations have been invited to submit a full application by 22 September 2020. Funding decisions are expected in late November/early December.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Claire Hanna:

[\[86195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ensure that child health remains a strategic priority for his Department.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a leading player in global health and remains committed to supporting child health interventions as part of our manifesto commitment to end preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children by 2030.

The UK will be working to strengthen and improve countries' health systems so that children and parents can access healthcare, have access to clean water, and have nutritious diets.

To deliver on our commitment we will work across different dimensions of child health, including providing funding for research and development, supporting nutrition and water and sanitation interventions to prevent malnutrition and diarrhoea, and ensuring children in the poorest countries have access to the life-saving vaccines that children in the richest countries routinely receive. For example, the UK has pledged £1.65 billion, the equivalent of £330 million per year, to support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's goal to immunise a further 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives.

Claire Hanna:

[\[86196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ensure that in addition to direct covid-19 global intervention programmes his Department tackles the indirect effects of the pandemic on maternal and child health.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains committed to supporting child, newborn and maternal health interventions as part of our manifesto commitment to end preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children by 2030. This is more important than ever given the COVID-19 pandemic which is exerting even more pressure on essential services with significant impacts for pregnant women, children and adolescents.

Globally we are working with agencies such as the World Health Organisation, UNFPA, the Partnership for Maternal Newborn and Child Health and the Global Financing Facility to support governments to maintain health systems in affected countries, provide technical guidance and advocate for sustained reproductive,

maternal, new-born and child health services. This may include filling essential drug supply gaps and supporting frontline health workers to stay in their jobs and provide quality services.

The UK has also pledged £1.65 billion, the equivalent of £330 million per year, to support GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance's goal to immunise a further 300 million children and save up to 8 million lives.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Contracts**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[84325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77761 on Department for International Development: Contracts, what the value of the contracts which will be renegotiated is; and what the value of those contracts will be after renegotiation.

Wendy Morton:

As of 2nd September DFID merged with the FCO to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The FCDO is working at pace to finalise the number of contracts to be renegotiated to account for the reduction in the UK's ODA budget and once this process is complete we will be in a position to confirm the value of the renegotiated contracts. We continue to work collaboratively with our supply partners and take a flexible and reasonable approach to find pragmatic solutions to support continuation of delivery where appropriate.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Reorganisation**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[88380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 77760, if he will publish the phased transformation programme.

James Cleverly:

The Government will publish further detail of the transformation of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in due course. As the FCDO sets its new priorities, it will be essential to draw on the outcomes of the Integrated Review and Comprehensive Spending Review to shape the objectives and systems of the new department. As such, the nature of the phased transformation of the FCDO will inevitably depend the findings of these reviews.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff**

Neil O'Brien:

[\[83935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many members of staff in his Department have equality, diversity or inclusion in their job title.

Neil O'Brien:

[\[87651\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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.

Nigel Adams:

This information is not held centrally. The FCDO is committed to putting diversity and inclusion at its heart.

■ Gender: Equality

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[89664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to (a) retain and (b) promote the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: Advancing gender equality and women's rights are a core part of the UK Government's mission, and Global Britain's role as a force for good in the world, including fulfilling every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda.

The new FCDO will continue to be a progressive force for women and girls, including for their sexual and reproductive health and rights and ensuring that their needs are central to our COVID-19 humanitarian response. We will work closely with partners across HMG to leverage the best development, diplomatic, defence and trade approaches to achieve maximum impact.

As part of the launch of the new Department, we will refresh and build on existing strategies, as well as develop new approaches, but we do not see the core ambitions of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality changing. The challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's political empowerment, women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) are as acute now, if not more so, as when we published the strategy in 2018.

■ Government Departments: Wines

Andrew Griffith:

[\[88952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of the Government Wine Cellar is (a) English wine and (b) wine from other countries.

Wendy Morton:

English wine made up approximately 10% of the overall stock of the Government Hospitality wine cellar as of 31st March 2020. Wines from other countries constituted about 88% of the cellar stock.

■ New Zealand: Foreign Relations

Ruth Jones: [\[82374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his New Zealand counterpart.

James Duddridge:

As one of our closest international partners, the Government has frequent contact with New Zealand. The Foreign Secretary last spoke to his New Zealand counterpart on 30 April. They discussed the international response to Covid-19 and Commonwealth Engagement. The Minister for Pacific and the Environment spoke to the New Zealand Climate Change Minister on 7 May to discuss COP 26 and the recovery from Covid-19.

■ Non-governmental Organisations

Fleur Anderson: [\[87690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which British-based International Development NGOs he has met with since April 2020.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary's external meetings will be published on GOV.UK in due course.

■ Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[89661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to publish details of the £2.9 billion reduction in Official Development Assistance planned 2020.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's National Statistics publication - 'Statistics on International Development' will provide a full breakdown of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend for the previous calendar year.

The Statistics for International Development published in Autumn 2021 will provide a full breakdown of the UK's ODA spend for 2020.

■ Russia: Minority Groups

Catherine West: [\[89796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has held with the Russian Government regarding the treatment of minority groups in Russia; whether he has made representations regarding the treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses to his Russian counterpart; and what further steps he is taking to work with international partners to highlight the treatment of minority groups in Russia.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The UK is deeply concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia, including the treatment of minority groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, who are being imprisoned or detained for practicing their faith. The UK Government has raised our concerns about the human rights situation repeatedly with the Russian Government at all levels and has made clear that Russia must abide by its international human rights obligations. I spoke about this with the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov on 17 June 2020 and the British Embassy in Moscow continues to raise our concern, including at Ambassadorial level, with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On 12 March and 23 July 2020, the UK's delegation to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna expressed our concern at the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. We have called repeatedly for Russia to end this persecution and to fulfil its international obligations, including respect for freedom of religion and belief. The FCDO remains in regular contact with representatives of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the UK and Russia.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous: Coronavirus****Catherine West:**[\[88374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the guidance, Staying safe and alert, updated on 9 September 2020, whether (a) Alcoholics Anonymous and (b) Narcotics Anonymous will continue to be able to meet in groups of up to 30 people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: From 14 September, social gatherings, both indoors and outdoors, must be limited to six people. There are several exemptions including where a household or support bubble is larger than six and for support groups which meet qualifying conditions.

The majority but not all support groups are not subject to the six person social gathering limit if they are in COVID-secure settings or public outdoor spaces, and are organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its members or those who attend its meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, providing support:

- to victims of crime (including domestic abuse);
- to those with, or recovering from, addictions (including alcohol, narcotics or other substance addictions) or addictive patterns of behaviour;
- to new and expectant parents;

- to those with, or caring for persons with, any long-term illness, disability or terminal condition or who are vulnerable;
- to those facing issues related to their sexuality or identity including those living as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; and
- to those who have suffered bereavement.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus

Sarah Owen:

[\[88935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce a bereavement support bubble policy to enable grieving households to form a support bubble with one other household in the case of further local or national lockdowns during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 September 2020]: From Monday 14 September, when meeting friends and family you do not live with (or have formed a support bubble with) you must not meet in a group of more than six, indoors or outdoors. This is against the law and the police will have the powers to enforce these legal limits, including to issue fines (fixed penalty notices) of £100, doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of £3,200.

In England, a support bubble is a close support network between a household of any size and a single adult household. Support bubbles are to assist the loneliest and most isolated in society. It is to provide extra support to some of those most impacted by the most difficult effects of the current social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission low.

Sarah Owen:

[\[88936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase bereavement support (a) during and (b) after the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 September 2020]: The Government is taking a cross-Government approach to address bereavement support and help ensure that families and friends of those deceased get the support they need.

In May, the Government awarded £4.2 million to mental health charities and charities providing bereavement support. This funding is part of an overall £750 million package for the voluntary sector announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in April.

■ Care Quality Commission: Coronavirus

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[88397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether CQC inspectors visiting care homes will be tested regularly for covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 15 September 2020]: The Department has considered the matter carefully and assessed that Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors do not meet the criteria for regular weekly asymptomatic testing, as they are not required to undertake 'hands on' close personal contact with people. They are therefore not required to have a COVID-19 test before entering a provider. If a CQC inspector is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, they will arrange a test via the Government portal. Should they receive a positive result they will no longer be able to go out on inspections and must self-isolate.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[88296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of excluding drug and alcohol related support groups from the covid-19 restrictions on a maximum number of six participants in a gathering announced on 9 September 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From 14 September, social gatherings, both indoors and outdoors, must be limited to six people. There are several exemptions including where a household or support bubble is larger than six and for support groups which meet qualifying conditions.

The majority but not all support groups are not subject to the six person social gathering limit if they are in COVID-secure settings or public outdoor spaces, and are organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its members or those who attend its meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, providing support:

- to victims of crime (including domestic abuse);
- to those with, or recovering from, addictions (including alcohol, narcotics or other substance addictions) or addictive patterns of behaviour;
- to new and expectant parents;
- to those with, or caring for persons with, any long-term illness, disability or terminal condition or who are vulnerable;
- to those facing issues related to their sexuality or identity including those living as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; and
- to those who have suffered bereavement.

■ Doctors: Negligence**Dr Philippa Whitford:**[\[86680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 July 2020 to Question 73784 on clinical negligence, if his Department will work with

healthcare, regulatory and legal experts to establish a new, independent, expert advisory committee to oversee claims, complaints and litigation including criminal prosecution against doctors as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[86681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 July 2020 to Question 73784 on clinical negligence, whether the Government is developing a cross-departmental approach to agreeing how claims, complaints and litigation against doctors and healthcare professionals resulting from the covid-19 outbreak are managed.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: We are committed to ensuring National Health Service staff have the support and resources they need to respond to the pandemic. We established the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Coronavirus to handle pandemic claims not falling under existing state indemnity schemes and we communicated these plans in a letter of 2 April to NHS staff and providers. We have also taken steps, working with the NHS, professional regulators and across Government to ensure that claims, complaints and court processes can appropriately take into account the unprecedented context NHS staff are working within in response to COVID-19.

We have no plans to establish alternative arrangements to oversee claims, complaints and litigation against doctors as a result of the response to COVID-19.

■ **Drugs: Rehabilitation**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[87465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will exempt drug rehabilitation group therapy sessions from covid-19 lockdown restrictions on meetings and guidance on social distancing; and if he will make a statement.

Julian Sturdy:

[\[88305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing exemptions to the covid-19 limits on social gatherings announced on 9 September 2020 for meetings of (a) Alcoholics Anonymous and (b) other support groups.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: From 14 September, social gatherings, both indoors and outdoors, must be limited to six people. There are several exemptions including where a household or support bubble is larger than six and for support groups which meet qualifying conditions.

The majority but not all support groups are not subject to the six person social gathering limit if they are in COVID-secure settings or public outdoor spaces, and are organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its

members or those who attend its meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, providing support:

- to victims of crime (including domestic abuse);
- to those with, or recovering from, addictions (including alcohol, narcotics or other substance addictions) or addictive patterns of behaviour;
- to new and expectant parents;
- to those with, or caring for persons with, any long-term illness, disability or terminal condition or who are vulnerable;
- to those facing issues related to their sexuality or identity including those living as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender; and
- to those who have suffered bereavement.

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Catherine West:

[\[88921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Recommendation 9 of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices safety Review, whether the Government has commenced that work; and steps he is taking to ensure that patient groups who submitted written and oral evidence to the review will all have a seat at the discussion table.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 16 September 2020]: All recommendations of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review are being considered carefully.

While this report was published on 8 July, it took over two years to compile and we therefore consider it vitally important that each recommendation, including recommendation nine and plans for further patient engagement are given full consideration.

HOME OFFICE

■ Home Office: Staff

Neil O'Brien:

[\[87648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 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.

James Brokenshire:

With regard to the Honourable Members question about the number of staff with the words equality, diversity, inclusion, gender, LGBT or race in their job title I refer him to the response given to his question of the 9th September 2020, UIN 83931.

■ Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Carla Lockhart:

[89879]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications have been made to the Places of worship protective security funding scheme; and how much funding has been awarded in each year since the creation of the scheme.

James Brokenshire:

Over the last four years of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, 807 eligible applications have been received. For the 2020/2021 round of the scheme, which closed on 9 August, we have received 243 eligible applications.

In the 2016/2017 round we awarded £435,446, in 2017/2018 we awarded £440,203, in 2018/2019 we awarded £806,281, and in the 2019/2020 we awarded £1,718,763. For the 2020/2021 round, the available funding is £3.2 million.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund

Richard Fuller:

[88278]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding has been allocated to each local authority through the coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.

Richard Fuller:

[88279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to ensure that unspent monies allocated to the coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund are (a) re-distributed under that scheme or (b) returned to central Government.

Luke Hall:

On 1 May, government announced up to £617 million available in the form of the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund (LADGF) to support certain small businesses that are not liable for business rates or rates reliefs and are therefore out of scope of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund (RHLGF). As set out in the Grant Funding Schemes guidance, a local authority's funding allocation for the LADGF equates to 5 per cent of the value of the hereditaments they have identified as in scope of the SBGF and RHLGF in their area: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>

Local authorities have now closed their LADGF schemes and are in the process of making final payments to businesses. These must be complete by 30 September. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will contact local authorities shortly to arrange the return of any unspent funds.

Richard Fuller:

[88280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of local authorities with excess funding under Phase 1 of the Coronavirus local authority discretionary grants scheme (a) kept all their criteria unaltered for subsequent phases and (b) amended the criteria to widen eligibility for subsequent phases of that scheme.

Luke Hall:

On 1 May, Government announced up to £617 million available in the form of the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund to support certain small businesses that are not liable for business rates or rates relief and are therefore out of scope of the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund. Local authorities were responsible for defining precise eligibility for the scheme in their area, subject to businesses meeting the national eligibility criteria set out in the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-business-support-grant-funding> . We do not receive management information from local authorities on local scheme eligibility criteria over the lifetime of the Discretionary Grants Fund.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[88294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to guidance on covid-19 lockdown restrictions, what his Department defines as a place of worship.

Luke Hall:

As outlined in our guidance for the safe use of places of worship, a place of worship refers to a building used for regular religious ceremonies, communal worship or similar gatherings by religious organisations. It includes the use of surrounding grounds, for example, adjoining carparks, courtyards or gardens for which the venue managers are also responsible

The guidance also covers premises when being used for religious gatherings, even when their primary purpose is not for religious gatherings, such as a community centre. These premises will only be able to be used where they are permitted to be open, and additional guidance may be applicable.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[88295]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether an organised religious service that takes place in a (a) back garden and (b) other outside venue, whilst respecting social distancing, complies with the covid-19 lockdown restrictions placed on religious worship.

Luke Hall:

In line with the regulations that came into force on 14 September, up to 6 people can gather in a private garden or other outdoor venue for any purpose. There are some

limited exceptions where gatherings of more than six people are possible, but worship services are not exempted in private outdoor spaces

If anyone is considering arranging an event for more than 6 people in a public outdoor space they should liaise with those responsible for the open space in question to ensure that the event can be staged in a safe and legal way, which includes undertaking a risk assessment that considers security.

■ Domestic Abuse: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[88915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much of the £10m allocated for domestic abuse safe accommodation in response to covid-19 has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by recipient organisations.

Luke Hall:

The fund closed on 20 July and final assessments have been made on the bids received

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Governments £10 million Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Emergency Support Fund has now been allocated to 147 charity bids, supporting 166 organisations to provide 1,890 bed spaces

Of those funded, 51 bids were from organisations offering specialised support to diverse groups including BAME and LGBTQ+. As of Monday 21 September, 95 per cent of the allocated funds will have been received by the respective recipients.

■ Homelessness

Caroline Lucas:

[\[88282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the time-limit for local authorities for spending Government funding to address homelessness during the covid-19 outbreak on the provision of medium- to long-term solutions to homelessness by those authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is a priority for this Government. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation.

We are also supporting those at risk of homelessness, with an injection of £9.3 billion into the welfare system. This includes increasing the Local Housing Allowance rates for Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants so that they are set at the 30th percentile of market rents.

The Government has also brought forward legislation requiring landlords to provide six months' notice in most circumstances. This will be in force from 29 August 2020 until 31 March 2021.

■ Homelessness: Charities

Tom Hunt:

[88409]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to local homeless charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kelly Tolhurst:

Charities, and the thousands of people who volunteer with them, make a real difference to vulnerable people's lives. We all need to work together to break the homelessness cycle and we are committed to drawing on as much expertise and experience as we can. Many of the projects we fund involve joint working with voluntary organisations as delivery partners, and in response to Covid-19 we have worked in partnership with the voluntary sector and faith and community groups.

MHCLG announced £6 million of emergency funding to provide relief for frontline homelessness charitable organisations who are directly affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. This is part of a £750 million package of government support for UK charities who may have been impacted by the pandemic. This Covid-19 Homelessness Response Fund was delivered by Homeless Link and applications closed on Wednesday 27 May.

Following a successful bidding process, over 130 charities across England benefitted from the £6 million emergency Fund. Further detail regarding the organisations who have been funded can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charities-to-benefit-from-support-for-rough-sleepers-during-pandemic>.

The Department also funds work to support a wide range of the homelessness sector – including voluntary organisations and independent providers of learning:

- Homeless Link are funded £800,000 to support the work of the single homelessness sector. This includes a leadership programme for leaders and managers of single homelessness services; the provision of practical support for frontline workers; maintaining the Homeless England database; and a research programme.
- The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS), which is run by Shelter, is funded by MHCLG to provide free training and expert advice to local authority and public authority staff including those with a duty to refer. For 2020/21 the Department has committed £1.95 million of grant funding to NHAS to ensure that frontline staff have the right skills and legal knowledge effectively to support individuals at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.
- MHCLG has funded StreetLink, a service run by Homeless Link and St Mungo's, since its inception in 2012.
- In 2020/21 MHCLG provided £200,000 of grant funding to Housing Justice. This fund works to equip faith and community night shelters to develop good practice and to help faith and community groups to be more coordinated and linked-in with

other homelessness provision (statutory, commissioned and other third sector) and provide a route away from the street.

■ **Next Steps Accommodation Programme: Brighton**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[88283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he will confirm to Brighton and Hove City Council on how much funding they will receive from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme; and if he will make a statement.

Kelly Tolhurst:

On 17 September, we announced the funding allocations for the interim accommodation element of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme. Brighton and Hove Council have been allocated £3,428,766. Bids for move on accommodation under the £161 million longer-term accommodation portion of the programme are being assessed and local authorities will be contacted in due course.

■ **Right to Buy Scheme: Southampton**

Royston Smith:

[\[88353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the viability of Southampton as a new pilot area for the voluntary right to buy scheme for housing association tenants.

Christopher Pincher:

The Voluntary Right to Buy Midlands pilot will complete later this year, and is being fully evaluated. The Government committed to evaluate new pilot areas, and further details will be provided in due course.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Trade Agreements: Albania**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, (a) when and (b) at what level his Department last held negotiations with the Government of Albania on a trade agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[89629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Algeria on a potential trade agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[89630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a potential trade

agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Cameroon on a potential trade agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the members of the East African Community on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Egypt on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK, and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Ghana on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Mexico on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Moldova on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Montenegro on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of North Macedonia on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Serbia on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Ukraine on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Emily Thornberry: [\[89642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Vietnam on a potential trade agreement that would take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK; and at what level those negotiations were held.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government has ambitious goals for British trade; our aim is to have 80% of United Kingdom trade with countries covered by free trade agreements within the next three years, starting with the USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Work to transition EU trade agreements contributes to this ambition.

To date, the United Kingdom has signed, or agreed in principle, 21 trade agreements, with 49 countries. This includes the United Kingdom–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, which was agreed in principle on 11th September 2020. Our total trade with these countries was worth £142 billion in 2019.

We are continuing our work to replicate existing EU trade agreements with trading partners, to secure continuity for British businesses at the end of the transition period. Negotiations continue on the remaining trade continuity agreements in a way that reflects the reality of the current situation.

An up-to-date list of trade continuity agreements, signed and in discussion, is available on GOV.UK at: [gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-trade-agreements-with-non-eu-countries)

■ Trade Agreements: Iceland

Emily Thornberry: [\[88273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, (a) when and (b) at what level her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Iceland on a trade agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK.

Emily Thornberry: [\[88274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, (a) when and (b) at what level her Department last held negotiations with the Government of Norway on a trade agreement that will take effect when existing EU trade agreements no longer apply to the UK.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom is in formal trade negotiations with the EEA EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) with the aim of agreeing a free trade agreement by the end of the transition period, to provide continuity to businesses on both sides. Officials are undertaking negotiations on a rolling basis and, in addition, I am in contact with my Ministerial counterparts in the EEA EFTA countries

TRANSPORT

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions

Bob Blackman: [\[88293\]](#)

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

Robert Courts:

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 representatives on the issue of decarbonisation, to discuss both domestic Net Zero and the international work to address GHG emissions being undertaken at the International Maritime Organization.

TREASURY**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Night-time Economy****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[88386\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential risk to (a) nightclubs, (b) dance halls and (c) discotheques of ending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in October 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is aware that the outbreak presents a significant challenge to nightclubs, which are unable to operate safely during the COVID-19 pandemic and must remain closed. The Government has put in place an unprecedented programme of support to help businesses across the economy through the crisis, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, loan guarantees, grants, VAT deferral and the forfeiture moratorium.

The Chancellor has said there will be no further extensions or changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). After eight months of the CJRS, the scheme will close at the end of October.

It would be challenging to target the CJRS to specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way, and it may be the case that there are more effective ways to help those businesses who are still unable to reopen.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance****John McNally:**[\[88349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that the Child Maintenance Service provides additional financial support to people affected by parental alienation as a form of domestic abuse.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service's responsibility is limited to maintenance payments. There are no plans for the Child Maintenance Service to provide additional financial support to people affected by parental alienation as a form of domestic abuse.

The Government takes the issue of domestic abuse seriously. The Child Maintenance Service will continue to monitor the service offered to clients who have experienced domestic abuse.

■ Employment Schemes**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:**[\[85076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how people have taken part in (a) the sector-based work academy programme and (b) JobCentre Plus work trials in the last 18 months.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: We are exploring ways to increase the robustness of this data to a point where it can be published.

■ **Jobcentres: Recruitment****Seema Malhotra:**[\[89706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coach (a) recruitment campaigns and (b) hires there were in each of the last 12 months.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The table shows by month the number of recruitment campaigns launched in that month and the number of hires. The hires link to recruitment campaigns launched in earlier months. In the 12 months from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 the Department has run 30 work coach recruitment campaigns, these are a mixture of large scale campaigns across regions and much smaller targeted campaigns in specific locations. The number of hires to date from these campaigns is shown by month in the table below.

In line with standard departmental practice in statistics, we do not publish details of numbers less than 5, or where individuals might otherwise be identified in the data, as this would breach our data protection obligations.

All departmental recruitment activity (apart from that to bring in new administrative officers) was suspended as part of our immediate COVID response from March through to June to ensure maximum supply to process benefit claims.

MONTH	RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS	NUMBER OF HIRES
2019		
Sep	3	Less than 5
Oct	6	30
Nov		58
Dec		74
2020		
Jan	3	533
Feb	1	160
Mar	2	62
Apr		Less than 5
May		0

MONTH	RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS	NUMBER OF HIRES
Jun	4	10
Jul	11	61
Aug		374

■ Unemployment: UK Relations with EU

Seema Malhotra:

[\[89707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she had made of the potential effect of not reaching an agreement on the future relationship with the EU on unemployment levels in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The Department for Work and Pensions is fully prepared for all possible outcomes of our negotiations with the European Union regarding our future relationship, including the event no agreement can be reached.

■ Universal Credit

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[89694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of new universal credit claims made since 3 May 2020 were unsuccessful; what proportion of those claims were unsuccessful because of income and capital rules; and what proportion of (a) successful and (b) unsuccessful universal credit claimants were eligible for contributory (i) jobseekers allowance and (ii) employment and support allowance since 3 May 2020.

Will Quince:

The Department has been working to ensure we get support as quickly as possible to those individuals and households most financially affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It has been a longstanding principle of Universal Credit (UC) that an assessment of earnings, other income and capital is needed to establish eligibility to target support to those most in need. There may be several reasons why someone is not eligible to receive UC, will have received a nil award or withdrew their claim. Among other reasons, this includes:

- speculative claims which were subsequently withdrawn;
- found new employment (which may at present include being rehired under the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or taken advantage of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme);
- redundancy payments affecting their entitlement;

- the last month's salary taken account. The key principle of UC is that it's calculated based on income, so if someone's income from work drops, their UC payment will rise to top it up;
- their claim may have been found to be fraudulent; and
- Individuals may have capital saved above the £16,000 limit for UC entitlement.

Between 4 May and 23 June inclusive there were 702,000 declarations made to Universal Credit, all of which are processed. Of these

58% received a UC payment

9% had a nil award due to earnings

6% were withdrawn by the claimant

1% closed due to ineligibility regarding capital rules

20% closed due to other ineligibility reasons

7% have outstanding verification preventing payment

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

Claimants move from existing benefits to UC when they experience a significant change in their circumstances that triggers a new claim to benefit. We do not centrally collate the number of claimants that have made a new claim to UC as a result of such a change in circumstances.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[89695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants for the new version of jobseekers allowance are entitled to universal credit when their claim expires after six months.

Will Quince:

A claimant in receipt of New Style JSA may wish to claim Universal Credit and benefit calculators are available on the GOV.UK website to help people identify potential eligibility across the welfare system. New Style Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants retain legacy benefit earnings, pension and payment rules. This is different to those for Universal Credit. Therefore, if a claimant starts working more than 16 hours per week the claim will close and they will not be able to benefit from the tailored features of Universal Credit, such as the taper and work allowance.

New Style JSA and Universal Credit can be paid in parallel from the start of a claim and is considered to be a 'dual claim'. This may be in circumstances such as where the award of New Style JSA is nil and is therefore a National Insurance credits only claim.

Payments of New Style JSA are taken into account as unearned income in the Universal Credit monthly assessment period. Universal Credit conditionality applies and the detail of what a claimant must do to meet their work-related requirements are

set out in their Universal Credit claimant commitment, which must be accepted for a New Style JSA and Universal Credit claim, as this remains a condition of entitlement.