

Daily Report

Monday, 21 September 2020

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 September 2020 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 21 September 2020). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Dangerous Driving: Sentencing

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[90144\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many sentences imposed for causing death by dangerous driving his Department has considered under the unduly lenient sentence scheme in each of the last two years; on how many occasions in each of the last two years he has referred such sentences to the Court of Appeal; and how many of those sentences have been extended by the Court of Appeal as the original sentence imposed fell outside the range of sentences that could reasonably have been imposed in the circumstances of the case.

Michael Ellis:

In 2018 – 29 sentences for causing death by dangerous driving were referred to the Attorney General's Office. Of those 4 were referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme. 2 sentences were found to be unduly lenient and the sentences were increased. 2 were found NOT to be unduly lenient and the sentences remained the same.

In 2019 – 43 sentences for causing death by dangerous driving were referred to the Attorney General's Office. Of those 2 were referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme. Both sentences were found to be unduly lenient and the sentences were increased.

To date, in 2020 – 18 sentences for causing death by dangerous driving have been referred to the Attorney General's Office. Of those 3 have been referred to the Court of Appeal, 1 was found to be unduly lenient and the sentence was increased, 1 was found NOT to be unduly lenient and the sentence remained the same, and 1 sentence is yet to be considered by the Court of Appeal.

■ United Kingdom Internal Market Bill

Louise Haigh:

[\[91095\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, whether officials in his Department sought a Ministerial Direction in relation to any aspect of the Internal Market Bill.

Suella Braverman:

There has been no Ministerial Direction requested.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ Aerospace Industry and Aviation: Coronavirus****Gavin Robinson:**[\[91054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 21 July 2020, Official Report column 193, how the figure of £8.5bn financial support for the aviation and aerospace sector was calculated.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The aerospace sector and its aviation customers are being supported with over £8.5 billion worth of support through the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility, grants for research and development (R&D), loan guarantees, and support for aerospace exports over the next 18 months.

The amount is made up of support across the Covid Credit Financing Facility (£2.7 billion), expected UK Export Finance support for aerospace and its aviation customers (£5.5 billion) and R&D support for aerospace (across 3 years over £500 million).

We will continue to back businesses strongly through the Covid-19 pandemic and as we return to growth.

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme**Alex Sobel:**[\[90237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports citing delays in banks processing awards under the Bounce Back Loans scheme; and what steps he is taking to encourage banks to speed up that awards process.

Paul Scully:

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs) was launched on 4 May to help small and medium-sized businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. The British Business Bank has not undertaken any specific assessment of reports of alleged delays in accessing BBLs facilities. The British Business Bank is however conducting a programme of audits of accredited lenders, and continues to engage with them regularly to discuss any issues with regards the operation of the scheme.

BBLs accredited lenders continue to experience high demand, but the scheme remains open to new applicants. As of 16 August, £35.47 billion has been loaned via 1,174,854 facilities under (BBLs).

■ **Business: Billing**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[88821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that invoices from small and medium businesses are paid on time by (a) Government and (b) non-governmental businesses.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[88822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) small and (b) medium businesses that have received late payment of invoices in the last five years in (i) Lincolnshire and (ii) the UK.

Paul Scully:

The Government's manifesto commits to making sure that businesses are paid on time.

At the end of Q3 2019/20 (the most recent complete set of data):

- o 7 of the 16 largest departments were meeting the target of 90% payment within 5 days.

- o 13 of the 16 departments were paying at least 95% of their invoices within the 30 day target, with 5 departments achieving 99% or more.

The Government is also taking action to simplify the application process for small businesses wanting to supply to the Government and to increase visibility of subcontracting opportunities. Our ambition is that all departments pay 90% of valid and undisputed invoices from SMEs within 5 days and 100% of valid and undisputed invoices within 30 days.

The Government acknowledges that late payment remains a significant problem for small businesses, who are least able to cover financial shortfalls and find temporary finance more difficult and more expensive to obtain.

We have made it a legal requirement for the UK's largest businesses to publish information on their payment practises, including the average amount of time taken to pay their suppliers.

Additionally, we will be consulting on strengthening the powers of the Small Business Commissioner to support small businesses that are exploited by their larger partners.

Since launching in December 2017, the Small Business Commissioner has recovered £7.4 million owed to small businesses, as well as naming eight large businesses who had paid their small business suppliers late following the Commissioner's investigation of a complaint.

■ Citizens Advice: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:** [\[88913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, of the £15m allocated for Citizens Advice to respond to the covid-19 outbreak, how much has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by each organisation.

Paul Scully:

Of the £15m, £13.5m has been allocated to Citizens Advice and £1.5m allocated to Citizens Advice Scotland.

To date, Citizens Advice have received £10,947,678.00, and Citizens Advice Scotland have received £1,282,921.00.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Stella Creasy:** [\[91029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2020 to Question 85040 on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, what the piece of legislation is that is referred to in the Answer that will provide statutory protection against the calculation of statutory redundancy pay being based on reduced pay in a furlough agreement under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Paul Scully:

The legislation that I was referring to in my answer of 9 September 2020 to Question [85040](#) is The Employment Rights Act 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) Regulations 2020.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Chi Onwurah:** [\[90127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2020 to Question 84242 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, if he will list those six supply agreements.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK Government has secured early access to 340 million vaccine doses through agreements with six separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 30 million doses.
- Oxford/AstraZeneca who will work to supply 100 million doses of the vaccine being developed by Oxford University.
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur to buy 60 million doses.
- Novavax for 60 million doses alongside funding of their Phase 3 clinical trial.
- Janssen for 30 million doses of their not-for-profit vaccine.
- Valneva for 60 million doses, with an option to acquire a further 130 million if the vaccine is proven to be safe, effective and suitable.

■ Dismissal: Coronavirus

Mick Whitley:

[\[90250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to ensure that no employee is dismissed from their job as a result of experiencing long covid symptoms.

Paul Scully:

Employees with the necessary qualifying service who consider that they have been dismissed unfairly may complain to an employment tribunal. The case of an employee who has been dismissed as a result of health issues clearly demands special consideration. For example, a tribunal will expect the employer to have considered whether there was suitable alternative work available. Employees may also be able to seek redress through the civil courts or employment tribunals if their dismissal breaches the terms of their contracts, for instance, because the employer has failed to comply with provisions relating to sickness absence.

■ Energy

Sajid Javid:

[\[88855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the continued expansion of the Local Energy Programme.

Kwasi Kwarteng:

The Local Energy Programme was launched as part of the Clean Growth Strategy in 2017, with £4.7 million funding. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has provided further funding in subsequent years, bringing the total funding for the Local Energy Programme to almost £20 million to date. This funding has been used to support Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local authorities and communities in England to play a leading role in decarbonisation and clean growth. The programme has funded the development of an energy strategy for every LEP in England and established five Local Energy Hubs across England, which provide LEPs and local authorities with access to expertise to help develop and secure investment in low carbon projects. It also includes the £10 million Rural Community Energy Fund, delivered through the Hubs, which offers grants to community organisations in rural areas to support the initial stages of development for renewable energy projects. BEIS continues to work with the Local Energy Hubs, LEPs and local authorities, to enable a joined-up approach to decarbonisation and clean growth.

■ Foreign Investment in UK: Nuclear Power

Sam Tarry:

[\[91191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will publish the findings of the 2016 security review into overseas nuclear investment.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government conducted a comprehensive review of the Hinkley Point C project in 2016. The conclusions of the review were set out in a statement made by the then Secretary of State on 15th September 2016, [Official Report, Column 1066](#).

For reasons of national security, I am unable to publish the security assessments produced to support the 2016 review. However, all investment involving critical infrastructure is subject to thorough scrutiny and needs to satisfy our robust legal, regulatory, and national security requirements.

■ Mothers and Pregnancy: Redundancy**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[88941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) pregnant women and (b) mothers are not disproportionately affected by redundancy in work.

Paul Scully:

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is unlawful. Redundancies which are based on unlawful discrimination are unacceptable. Legislation is in place to ensure processes are fair and reasonable - and informed by appropriate equalities considerations. Employees who believe their redundancy was unfair may be able to complain to an employment tribunal.

The Government is determined to do more to ensure pregnant women and new mothers are not disproportionately affected by redundancy. Following a consultation last year, the Government has committed to extend the statutory redundancy protection which a mother currently enjoys while on maternity leave, shared parental leave or adoption leave for a period for six months following a return to work. We will bring these measures forward as soon as there is an appropriate opportunity.

■ National Security and Investment Bill 2019-21**Sam Tarry:**[\[91192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what types of company he plans on including within the scope of the proposed national security and investment Bill.

Paul Scully:

The 2018 National Security and Investment White Paper consultation indicated that the proposed legislative reforms would extend to the wider economy and not be limited to specific types of company.

The National Security and Investment Bill will be brought forward in due course.

■ Remote Working

Derek Twigg:

[\[90945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the regulations to protect online platform workers using crowd work platforms.

Paul Scully:

In the Queen's Speech, we announced we will bring forward an Employment Bill to deliver on a range of Manifesto commitments.

This legislation will make workplaces fairer by introducing new protections for those in the gig economy.

The preparation of an Employment Bill follows recent assessments of modern ways of working. Many of these aspects are complex and so it is only right that we take time to consider how best to achieve change that works for all.

We will bring forward detailed proposals in due course.

■ United Kingdom Internal Market Bill

Louise Haigh:

[\[91094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether officials in his Department sought a Ministerial Direction in relation to any aspect of the Internal Market Bill.

Paul Scully:

There has been no Ministerial Direction requested.

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Julie Elliott:

[\[906276\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of veterans who have died from suicide in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Catherine West:

[\[906280\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of veterans who have died from suicide in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Marie Rimmer:

[\[906286\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of veterans who have died from suicide in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to PQ [88289](#) on 21 September 2020.

■ Government Communication Service**Philip Davies:** [\[88853\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) value was of contracts issued, (b) which foreign governments were involved and (c) other communication services were provided by Government Communication Service International to foreign governments in the last 12 months.

Julia Lopez:

Further to the information published in the Cabinet Office Annual Accounts for 2019-20, the total value of communications contracts issued by the Cabinet Office was £981,403 supporting UK security and trade objectives in Nigeria, Tunisia, Montenegro, Philippines and India. Government Communication Service International shares communication expertise and knowledge based on UK Government best practice in security, economy, health and education communications.

■ Veterans: Medals**Carol Monaghan:** [\[90165\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason the Advisory Military Sub-Committee has been delayed in bringing forward recommendations on the case for service medals for British nuclear test veterans.

Carol Monaghan: [\[90166\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, by what date the Advisory Military Sub-Committee plans to bring forward recommendations on the case for service medals for British nuclear test veterans.

Carol Monaghan: [\[90167\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what criteria are used by the Advisory Military Sub-Committee to decide whether to recommend a service medal award for British nuclear test veterans.

Carol Monaghan: [\[90168\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times the Advisory Military Sub-Committee has met in 2020.

Johnny Mercer:

Further to the [answer given to PQ 25154](#) on 9 March 2020, campaigners can be assured their case is under review and recommendations will be made as soon as possible.

The criteria used by the Advisory Military Sub-Committee to review the case for medals can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/830839/Advisory-Military-Sub-Committee-Terms-of-Reference-2019-1-1.pdf.

The Advisory Military Sub Committee met three times in 2019, and on 4 February 2020.

■ Veterans: Mental Health

Alex Davies-Jones:

[906285]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to improve mental health support for veterans.

Ruth Jones:

[91152]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to improve mental health support for veterans in (a) Newport West, (b) Wales and c) the UK.

Johnny Mercer:

The Government is taking a number of measures to improve mental health support for veterans across the UK. From the beginning of service in the Armed Forces, personnel now undergo 'through-life' psychological resilience training, and upon leaving they have access to the Defence Transition Service (DTS), launched in October 2019. The DTS provides support for Service leavers and families who are the most likely to face challenges during transition to civilian life, including an impact on their mental health.

Wherever they live in the UK, all veterans are able to receive specialist mental health support if they need it. As healthcare is a devolved matter, further questions regarding Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should be addressed to the relevant devolved administration.

As well as the statutory services delivered by the NHS, the Government provides funding to a range of charity and third sector organisations, through the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and, most recently, a £6 million emergency COVID-19 Impact Fund. This funding has supported fantastic organisations across the four nations to deliver services to support the mental and physical wellbeing of veterans.

We are also investing in research, to improve our understanding of mental health amongst serving and ex-service personnel. This includes a recent study looking at the impact of COVID-19 on veterans and a long term veterans study examining a range of mental health and wellbeing factors; both of these are led by Kings College. A further two studies will contribute to improving the data and understanding around suicide; the first examining the cause of death, including suicide in members of the Armed Forces who have served since 2001 and a further study looking at the events

in the 12 months leading up to known suicides in the last five years of anyone from the Armed Forces community.

■ **Veterans: Suicide**

Grahame Morris:

[\[88289\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what systems are in place to monitor and record veteran suicide rates.

Johnny Mercer:

Data about suicide rates amongst the general population across England and Wales are reported by the Office for National Statistics using information provided to registrars by coroners in their records of inquest. Historically, governments have relied on specific studies relating to the cause of death, including suicide, amongst veterans' cohorts from specific campaigns, for example the Falklands campaign and the 1990/91 Gulf conflict.

In order to ensure that the Government has the most up-to-date understanding of the prevalence of suicide in the Armed Forces community, two further studies are being conducted. The first is documenting all causes of death, including suicide, amongst those who have served in the Armed Forces since 2001. This study will continue on an ongoing basis to provide real-time data about causes of death, including suicide, in the Armed Forces community. A second study is looking at the factors in the year leading up to any confirmed suicide in the Armed Forces community in the last five years.

Whilst these studies will provide updated and improved data about the prevalence of suicide in the veteran community, the importance of this issue means that the Government is committed to exploring other routes, including a potential role for coroners, by which suicide amongst the veteran community could be recorded accurately and consistently so as to help inform improved support and interventions aimed at preventing suicide.

DEFENCE

■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[906267\]](#)

What plans he has to increase the number of people applying to join the armed forces.

James Heappey:

Interest in the Armed Forces has been strong over the last recruiting year with 2019-20 seeing intake increase by 31%.

Recruitment campaigns and the advertising that accompanies them continues as planned. There is a Covid-related reduction in basic training capacity but all three Services are looking to work around this. Most notably, we've seen sailors passing out alongside their officers at BRNC Dartmouth last month.

Tony Lloyd:

[\[906268\]](#)

When the Government plans to publish the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Integrated Review will remain closely aligned with the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), to ensure that ambition, capabilities and budgets can be closely coordinated.

Both will publish later in the year. At its heart the Integrated Review is about developing the capabilities we need to meet the threats we face.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[906273\]](#)

What steps his Department has taken to maintain the overall size of the armed forces since the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

James Heappey:

We have made significant progress in delivering the aims of the last Strategic Defence and Security Review. But the global picture has changed since 2015, and we must adapt to the new threats that confront us. That is why the Prime Minister has commissioned the Integrated Review.

I can assure the House that this Government is committed to ensuring that the United Kingdom continues to have the world-class Armed Forces that it needs and deserves.

Gill Furniss:

[\[906278\]](#)

When his Department plans to award the contract to build the Fleet Solid Support Ships; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We have already started a market engagement exercise and have had a healthy response. I intend to announce the procurement timetable for these warships in due course after market testing has completed. We intend to encourage international partners to work with UK firms to bid, which will build on the successes of Type 31.

Christian Matheson:

[\[906279\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the contribution of defence procurement contracts to the UK economy.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence spent £19.2 billion with UK industry and commerce in financial year 2018-19, directly supporting 119,000 jobs across the country and indirectly supporting many thousands more.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[906290\]](#)

What plans his Department has to procure additional F-35 Lightnings; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

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

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[906293\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of trends in the number of non-disclosure agreements used within his Department's defence programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence only uses non-disclosure agreements in its commercial arrangements by exception; for example if there is, prior to a tender or contract, sensitive information to protect during market engagement. These are prepared on a case by case basis. A trend analysis has not been undertaken, but it remains the case that NDAs are only used where they are deemed absolutely necessary.

Dr Julian Lewis:[\[906307\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the utility of offensive cyber in countering conventional aggression.

Mr Ben Wallace:

We recognise cyber as a domain of military operations alongside air, land, sea and space.

Offensive cyber is now a critical part of our arsenal. Defence has integrated this into our military planning alongside the full range of military effects. We will continue to develop and exploit Offensive Cyber's potential to complement and enhance our conventional military capabilities and assets.

Offensive Cyber has already demonstrated its utility, against Daesh, where the UK suppressed Daesh propaganda, hindered their ability to coordinate attacks, and protected coalition forces on the battlefield.

For reasons of safeguarding national security, I cannot discuss our cyber capability in greater detail or be specific on how it is employed.

■ Armed Forces: Conduct**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[90062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many claims have been made by solicitors on the conduct of UK servicemen and servicewomen, in the last 25 years.

Johnny Mercer:

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

Whilst some information is held relating to the question posed, that information is not sufficient to enable the provision of a full response to this question. The Department does not record separately information that would serve to confirm the causative nature of the incident that gives rise to individual claims and therefore it is not possible to determine which of those claims received during the past 25 years arose out of the conduct of UK servicemen and servicewomen without reviewing all of the common law claims for damages received in that period. However, it is possible to confirm that some 2,300 common law claims for compensation including allegations relating to death, injury and varying degrees of mistreatment arising from the actions of UK Forces personnel operating in Northern Ireland, Iraq and the Gulf and Afghanistan have been received within the specified time period.

■ **Greece: Turkey**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[89619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts on the territorial dispute between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean Sea; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

My right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary has spoken to several of his NATO counterparts, including his Greek and Turkish colleagues. The UK continues to encourage constructive bilateral discussions, and to encourage de-escalation so as to avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation. It is essential that we work together with our international partners in the Eastern Mediterranean to achieve stability and mutual prosperity.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[91140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason he has not replied to the letter of 6 May 2020 from the Defence Select Committee on the Overseas Operations Bill; and on what date he plans to respond.

Johnny Mercer:

The Overseas Operations Bill seeks to help tackle vexatious claims and the cycle of reinvestigations against our Armed Forces personnel and veterans. This is one of the Government's key commitments.

I assure the hon. member that the Committee will receive a response before the Second Reading of the Bill on 23 September, to ensure consistency of communications while the Bill is finalised.

■ Military Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[90952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost per flight hour is of the in-service aircraft (a) C130J, (b) C17, (c) E3 AWACS Sentry, (d) A400M, (e) P-8, (f) R1 Sentinel, (g) Rivet Joint and (h) C17.

Jeremy Quin:

I am withholding the information requested as its release would prejudice commercial interests.

■ Ministry of Defence: Land

Christian Matheson: [\[90156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will delay the decision on disposal of his Departments land at Chorlton Cum Backford, Chester, until further consultation with (a) previous landowners and (b) local residents has been undertaken.

Jeremy Quin:

In accordance with the Crichel Down Rules, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) offered the land at Chorlton Cum Backford, to the former owner. These rules require all Government Departments to offer back surplus land (that meets the conditions set out in the rules) to the former owner at current market value.

Consultation with the former owner began in September 2019. The former owner has had the opportunity to consider the formal valuation of current market value since June 2020. The former owner has provided his response. The DIO are reviewing the former owner's proposal.

If the sale to the former owner does not proceed, then the site will be offered to the open market, in line with Treasury Guidance. This enables consultation with all interested parties, including local residents.

■ Oman: Military Bases

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[89810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the UK Port Task Group is in Duqm in Oman; how many personnel that group has; and what the source is of its funding.

James Heappey:

The UK Port Task Group, which is funded by the UK Ministry of Defence, has temporarily deployed 20 personnel to assist with a planned port visit to support Defence activity at the UK Logistics hub.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[89811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many additional British personnel will be stationed at the UK logistics hub in Duqm, Oman, once it has tripled in size.

James Heappey:

The £23.8 million investment in the UK logistics hub at Duqm port will triple the size of the existing UK base. This investment will help facilitate Royal Navy deployments to the Indian Ocean including the ability to support the UK's two aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. The possibility of additional personnel to support this Logistics hub at Duqm is being considered as part of the ongoing Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

■ Saudi Arabia: European Fighter Aircraft**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[89805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when Royal Saudi Air Force pilots last trained to fly the Typhoon in the UK; and whether that training is ongoing.

James Heappey:

Training for Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) aircrew has continued and is ongoing, with the most recent RSAF aircrew graduating from flying training in April 2020.

■ Saudi Arabia: Military Aid**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[89804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Saudi Arabian pilots are training at RAF bases in the UK; and what models of aircraft they are training on.

James Heappey:

The number of Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) pilots currently training at RAF bases in the UK is less than 10. The Hawk T2 and Typhoon aircraft are used for this training.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[89807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when Royal Saudi Air Force Hawk T2 pilots last conducted air-to-ground attacks at the Pembrey Sands Air Weapons Range; and what munitions they fired.

James Heappey:

The Hawk T2 simulates weapons. Therefore, no weapons have been fired at Pembrey Sands Air Weapons range by Royal Saudi Air Force pilots in the course of their training.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:[\[89808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what type of munitions have been fired at Pembrey Sands air weapons range by the current group of Royal Saudi Air Force pilots undergoing Hawk T2 training at RAF Valley.

James Heappey:

No weapons or munitions have been fired at Pembrey Sands by the Royal Saudi Air Force pilots currently undergoing Hawk T2 training at RAF Valley. The Hawk T2 only simulates weapons.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[89809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when Royal Saudi Air Force Typhoon pilots last undertook training in air-to-ground attacks in the UK where that training took place; and what munitions those pilots fired.

James Heappey:

Royal Saudi Air Force Typhoon pilots only undertake air to ground training in a simulator and through a classroom brief; therefore, no munitions have been fired.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ ARM

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[90150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will refer the Nvidia / SoftBank Arm deal to the Competition and Markets Authority under the 2002 Enterprise Act on national security grounds.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Enterprise Act 2002 allows the government to call in transactions such as this. We will consider if and when it would be appropriate to do so.

■ Arts: Finance

Jonathan Gullis:

[\[89874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) the film sector and (b) other creative industries.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government recognises the huge contribution the film and wider creative industries sectors make, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of its people.

Regarding the film sector specifically, the Government has worked alongside industry to quickly develop guidance allowing for the restart of production activity and has continued to support the sector in applying this guidance. In addition, in July 2020 the Government granted quarantine exemption for cast and crew of eligible film and high-end television productions, bespoke action which has helped ensure that significant inward investment projects have still been able to operate safely in the UK.

Since then, the Government has also announced the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, a £500m scheme to help TV and film productions get back up and running across the country, despite a lack of available insurance for Covid-19 losses. It is a temporary scheme that will compensate eligible productions for costs incurred due to delays or abandonment of productions because of Covid-19.

As you will know, in March, the Government implemented an unprecedented package to support businesses, charitable organisations, workers and the self-employed

through the Coronavirus crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and business rates relief in particular are providing support to organisations across these sectors.

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

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

The Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of cultural and creative sectors.

We are committed to continuing to work with the film and creatives industries sectors to understand the difficulties they face and help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery.

■ **Broadband: Warley**

John Spellar:

[\[85936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the progress of the roll-out of full fibre digital infrastructure in Warley constituency in the last 12 months.

Matt Warman:

Good progress has been made in the Warley constituency over the past 12 months; as of September 2020, full fibre coverage stands at 31%, which is up from 0.5% in September 2019. This is above the UK figure of 16%.

Additionally, as of September 2020 86% of premises in Warley have access to gigabit-capable connectivity. In the same month last year, that figure stood at just 0.5%. UK gigabit-capable coverage stands at 26%.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[88903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £370 million National Lottery Community funding has been (a) allocated and (b) received by organisations to date.

Rachael Maskell:

[88905]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the funding allocated to small and medium organisations has been (a) allocated and (b) received by organisations to date; and what the regional allocation is of that funding.

Rachael Maskell:

[88906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £370 million allocated to the National Lottery Community Fund and held back for emergencies has been allocated to date; what criteria was used to allocate that funding; and which organisations have received an allocation of that funding.

Rachael Maskell:

[88907]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £20 million allocated as match funding to the Big Night In initiative has been (a) allocated and (b) received by organisations to date; and what criteria was used to allocate that funding.

Rachael Maskell:

[88908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £360 million allocated to Government departments for further distribution has been allocated to each department to date; and how much has been spent by each Government department.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Government has made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. This will ensure charities and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, can continue their vital work during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Of the £750m, £200 million of this money is being distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF). As of 13th September 2020, £116,162,678 million has been awarded to organisations through this Fund, which is being disbursed to them in accordance with the payment profiles set out in the onward grant agreements. Of this amount, £58,332,938 has been allocated to medium sized organisations and £25,795,260 to small organisations.

The eligibility criteria used by NLCF to assess CCSF funding applications can be found on the NLCF's website:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-over->

[10k#section-2](#). A list of all organisations that have been awarded funding from the CCSF will be published once the allocation process is complete.

£85 million has been allocated to the 'Community Match Challenge' which is matching funds raised by philanthropists, foundations and grant making organisations to further support small to medium sized organisations from across the country working with those who are most vulnerable and have been hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak. This Fund closed for bids on 2nd August and the outcome will be announced shortly.

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

To support the BBC's 'Big Night In' (BNI), the Government matched the generous donations of the public across the country with a grant for £20 million to the National Emergencies Trust (NET) which is working in Partnership with the UK Community Foundations and a further £17 million which was shared between Comic Relief (CR) and Children in Need (CiN). As of 11 September, £16,641,702.24 has been allocated by all three funds with awards disbursed to charities through the usual process. The eligibility criteria used to assess applications for BNI funding can be found here for the NET element of the funding: <https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-programmes> and here for CR and CiN funding: <https://www.comicrelief.com/funding>

£360 million has been allocated by central government departments with £200 million of this directly supporting hospices across the country. The remaining funding has been allocated and awarded, as follows, with distribution to charities undertaken by the relevant department in accordance with the relevant grant agreements:

FUND/DEPARTMENT/ALLOCATION	AWARDED (AS AT 11 SEPTEMBER 2020)
£5m Loneliness Fund, DCMS	£4.92m
£14m Zoos Support Fund, DEFRA (with top-up £2.19m of £86m from HMT in July)	
£6m Homelessness Fund, MHCLG	£5.92m
£34.15m Vulnerable Children Fund, DfE and Home Office	£11.8m through HO £21.8m through DfE
£27m Domestic Abuse Survivors and Survivors of Sexual Violence, MoJ and Home Office	£22.1m through MoJ £1.7m through HO
£1.8m Survivors of Modern Slavery, Home Office	£1.7m

FUND/DEPARTMENT/ALLOCATION	AWARDED (AS AT 11 SEPTEMBER 2020)
£5.4m Legal Advice, MoJ	£5.2m
£16m Meals for Those in Need, DEFRA	£15.7m
£15m Support for the Citizens Advice service, BEIS	£15m
£22m Support for Health Charities, DHSC	£23.7m (includes additional DHSC match funding over minimum requirements)
£6m Support for Armed Services, MoD	£6m
£10m Domestic Abuse safe accommodation fund, MHCLG	£8.8m

■ Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[86535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will extend access to the £1.57 billion support package for cultural and heritage organisations to members of the Professional Lighting and Sound Association affected by the covid-19 lockdown restrictions on the live events sector; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinanage:

We recognise the crucial role that individuals play in making our arts and creative industries world-leading. As a result of these grants and loans, organisations will be more able to resume cultural activity, albeit in a socially distanced way, which will increase employment opportunities for freelancers. Each organisation that receives money will know what best they can do to support their workforce, including their freelance workforce. To complement the funding for organisations made available by Government, ACE have announced £95m of additional support for individuals, and ACE will also be adding £2m into relevant benevolent funds to support those including stage managers and technicians.

■ Darts: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon:

[\[91003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether darts games are exempted from the covid-19 social distancing rule of six.

Nigel Huddleston:

Organised sporting or licensed physical activity are allowed to continue in groups of more than six. This can be in any public place not under other public health restrictions

These activities either need to be organised by a national governing body, club, registered instructor/coach, business or charity; and/or involve someone who has received an official license to use equipment relevant to the activity. In all cases, the organiser must conduct a risk assessment and ensure compliance with COVID-19 Secure guidance.

Each darts club should follow Covid guidance developed by the National Governing Body, the [England Darts](#) Organisation to ensure a safe return to play.

■ Digital Technology

Chi Onwurah:

[83794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the consultation process will be for the Government's forthcoming Digital Strategy; and what information (a) is and (b) will be made available online for individuals and organisations to (i) understand and (ii) input into that strategy.

Caroline Dinenage:

Collaboration will be key to the development of our new Digital Strategy. We are seeking ideas from a broad range of stakeholders so that we can fully benefit from the digital-led recovery from covid-19 that the Strategy seeks to enable. This includes engaging with businesses who design, develop or use digital technologies; civil society organisations working in or using digital technologies; academics, experts and the wider public. We encourage anyone with an interest in contributing to the Strategy to get in touch with DCMS officials at the following address:

digital.strategy@dcms.gov.uk

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Derek Twigg:

[86549]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support he is providing specifically to (a) people and (b) companies that provide technical services to (i) concerts and (ii) other live events.

Caroline Dinenage:

We recognise the crucial role that technicians play in the UK's live music and events sector. The Self-Employed Income Support Scheme has helped millions of people across the UK, with those eligible receiving a cash grant worth 80% of their average monthly trading profit over the last three years. This has covered 95% of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment.

In addition to this scheme designed to support the self-employed, the Government announced an unprecedented £1.57bn support package for organisations in the Arts and Culture sectors. This funding will help preserve and resume cultural activity, initially with socially distanced audiences and subsequently kick start employment opportunities for freelancers.

To complement the funding for organisations made available by Government, Arts Council England have announced £95m of additional support for individuals, including freelancers. This involves:

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

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

Sir Graham Brady:

[90050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support the Government plans to provide to the events sector during autumn and winter 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

The Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of cultural and creative sectors. This support package will benefit cultural sector services by providing support to cultural venues and many other organisations in the Creative Industries that host live events, to stay open and continue operating.

From 15th August, and as part of the Government's 5 stage roadmap to get performing arts and live entertainment sectors back up and running as soon as possible, organisations can now put on live indoor performances in front of a socially-distanced audience. This is in addition to the earlier announcement that from 11 July we can all enjoy performances outdoors with social distancing.

We are committed to continuing to work with the events sector to understand the difficulties they face and help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery. We recognise that the events industry and its supply chain has been severely impacted by Covid-19.

We are continuing to meet with stakeholders, including through the Events & Entertainment and Visitor Economy working groups and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to discuss the specific issues facing the sector.

Robert Halfon:

[91007]

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

Caroline Dinenage:

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

The Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. This funding will provide targeted support to organisations across a range of cultural and creative sectors. This support package will benefit cultural sector services by providing support to cultural venues and many other organisations in the Creative Industries that host live events, to stay open and continue operating.

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We are continuing to meet with stakeholders, including through the Events & Entertainment and Visitor Economy working groups and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to discuss the specific issues facing the sector.

■ Exercise: Finance

Stuart Anderson:

[86166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding his Department makes available to communities to promote exercise and fitness.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. It is important that exercise facilities remain accessible for people from all backgrounds as we make efforts to return to normality after the Covid lockdown period.

Once lockdown was announced, Sport England launched a successful online campaign 'Join the Movement' specifically aimed at promoting exercise and fitness in and around the home.

Sport England has announced a £210 million package of financial support to help community sports and exercise clubs through this crisis.

■ Football

Stuart Anderson:

[88930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government plans to take to (a) ensure the democratic accountability of football club owners to fans and supporters (i) at AGMs and (ii) more widely, (b) improve processes of due diligence of prospective owners of football clubs and (c) enhance the local ownership of football clubs throughout the UK.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many with a great history. It is vital they are protected.

The Government's Expert Working Group on football supporter ownership and engagement in 2016 set out a number of recommendations to encourage greater engagement between supporters and those that run their club, while also helping to remove barriers to supporter ownership. The Premier League and English Football League now require clubs to meet with supporters at least twice a year to discuss strategic issues, giving fans the opportunity to shape the direction of the club.

The Government has also committed to undertaking a fan led review of football governance, which will include consideration of the Owners' and Directors' test. We are currently deciding the scope and structure of the review.

Liz Twist:

[90210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of fan representation on football club boards.

Nigel Huddleston:

Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many with a great history. It is vital they are protected.

The Government's Expert Working Group on football supporter ownership and engagement in 2016 set out a number of recommendations to encourage greater engagement between supporters and those that run their club, while also helping to remove barriers to supporter ownership.

Whilst the Group was broadly supportive of the idea of supporter directors on club boards in principle, it believed that strong, structured dialogue with a representative group of supporters is a more inclusive way of ensuring supporters are informed and able to hold club owners and senior executives to account. The Premier League and English Football League now require clubs to meet with supporters at least twice a year to discuss strategic issues, giving fans the opportunity to shape the direction of the club.

■ Football: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson:

[\[91157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) Wolverhampton Wanderers and (b) other UK football supporters are able to access football matches during the period when they cannot watch in person as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government was pleased to see both the Premier League and English Football League announcements on widening broadcasting coverage for upcoming games.

All Premier League matches in September will be broadcast live, while the EFL announced that, while stadiums remain closed, every EFL game that has not been selected for live coverage will be streamed on club websites.

■ Football: Gambling

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[91087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on levels of problem gambling of permitting the advertising of gambling on football shirts; and whether the forthcoming Gambling Review will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) placing on a statutory basis the industry whistle to whistle ban on gambling and (b) banning gambling advertising from football.

Nigel Huddleston:

Problem gambling is a complex issue and there are multiple and varied factors which contribute to its development in individuals. Figures from the British Gambling Prevalence Surveys and Health Surveys suggest that problem gambling rates in Great Britain have remained stable at below 1% since 1999.

Gambling sponsorship must be socially responsible and must never be targeted at children or vulnerable people. The Football Association has strict rules about the size and placement of sponsor logos on all players' shirts, and prohibits any reference to gambling or gambling operators on shirts for teams where all players are under 18 years old. The gambling industry code for socially responsible advertising also requires that operators' logos must not appear on any commercial merchandising which is designed for children (for instance in children's sizes). In August 2019 the code was amended to include a whistle to whistle ban on broadcast advertising around live sport.

The government has committed to review the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age and further details will be announced in due course.

■ Gambling: Regulation**Carolyn Harris:**[\[88918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to his Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 81831 on Gambling: Regulation, what his Department's policy is on the distinction between (a) grey and (b) black gambling markets; and whether Northern Ireland is considered a (i) grey or (ii) black market for gambling.

Nigel Huddleston:

Jurisdictions in which there are not clear laws on the legality of gambling are often referred to as grey markets. Jurisdictions where gambling is clearly and unambiguously prohibited by law are often referred to as black markets.

Northern Ireland is not considered either a grey market or a black market for gambling. Gambling activity in Northern Ireland is a devolved issue regulated under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985. The law is enforceable by the Northern Irish authorities such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

There is no provision for licensing online gambling in the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 but under section 5 of the Gambling (Licensing and Advertising) Act 2014 online operators who wish to advertise their services in Northern Ireland must hold a licence from the Gambling Commission. The Department of Communities for Northern Ireland completed a consultation on gambling regulation in February 2020.

■ Gambling: Reviews**Carolyn Harris:**[\[86699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to launch its review of gambling.

Carolyn Harris:[\[86704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Gambling Commission plans to publish its review of stakes and prizes.

Carolyn Harris:[\[86705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government will take to assess risks to consumers to inform and provide a baseline for the gambling review.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government committed in its manifesto to review the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure it is fit for the digital age. Further details will be announced in due course.

The Gambling Commission is the independent regulator for the gambling industry. As part of this role it continually monitors the gambling market for risks to consumers, drawing on a wide range of intelligence sources as well as conducting a quarterly

survey of gambling behaviours. It provides both formal and informal advice to government on a range of issues and will continue to do so throughout the forthcoming Gambling Review, including on issues such as stakes and prizes. I understand that the Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission wrote to you recently to provide an update on its work around online player protections.

The Commission will shortly publish a Strategic Risk Assessment setting out the current risks to consumers and the public and its priorities to address them. The Government will draw on this and other evidence about gambling participation and behaviour to inform and provide a baseline for the Gambling Act Review.

■ **Holiday Accommodation: Coronavirus**

Karen Bradley:

[90125]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the rule of six applies to holiday cottages; and whether exemptions are available to allow more than six people from different support bubbles to visit self catering holiday cottages.

Nigel Huddleston:

Since 14 September, people must not meet with people from other households socially in groups of more than 6. This applies indoors and outdoors, including in private homes and self-catered holiday accommodation.

If people are planning to go on holiday to a holiday home, self catered cottage or any other guest accommodation with more than 6 people who are not in one family group or bubble, they will need to make arrangements to reduce the size to 6.

■ **Internet: Regulation**

Jo Stevens:

[91078]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the (a) UK online regulation framework and (b) effectiveness of UK online regulatory bodies of plans by (i) Apple, (ii) Microsoft and (iii) Google to enable DNS over HTTPS on their services and platforms.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS continues to monitor the DNS over HTTPS roll out of all key companies, including Apple, Microsoft and Google and its potential impact on proposals for a new Online Harms Regulatory Framework.

The Online Harms regulator will have a suite of powers to take effective enforcement action against companies that fail to fulfill their duty of care. We will set out further details in the full Government response later this year.

■ **Loneliness: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[89780]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline

charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £5 million allocated to the Loneliness Covid-19 Grant Fund has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations.

Mr John Whittingdale:

On 13 May 2020, government launched the £5 million Loneliness Covid-19 grant fund to enable national organisations working to tackle loneliness and build social connections to continue and adapt their critical work. On 15 June 2020, nine grants, totalling £4,920,000, were announced. Further details on successful organisations, including project descriptions and grant amounts, can be found [here](#). The remaining £80,000 has been set aside for an independent evaluation of the Loneliness Covid-19 Fund.

As of Thursday 17th September, £2,029,599.80 has been disbursed to organisations. The remaining £2,890,400.20 of grant funding will be disbursed to and spent by organisations by end-December 2020. The £80,000 of evaluation costs will be spent by end-March 2021.

■ **Museums and Galleries: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[89786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he is taking steps to ensure that local authorities support public local museums and galleries during the next phases of the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Dinenage:

Local authority owned museums and galleries, who have exhausted other avenues for funding, were entitled to apply for support through the government's major £1.57 billion support package for cultural organisations. This funding is designed to support organisations through the coronavirus pandemic, available until spring 2021.

Culture and Heritage are at the heart of communities across the country, enriching the lives of millions and this financial investment is testament to the role this sector plays in our lives.

This fund will protect cultural assets of international, national and regional importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions.

In addition, MHCLG is providing local authorities with an unprecedented package of support, including £3.7bn of un-ringfenced grants. This direct financial support the government has provided is just part of a comprehensive package of support which includes cashflow measures as well as grants and business rates reliefs for businesses. The Secretary of State for Communities has also announced a co-payment scheme to cover irrecoverable losses in sales, fees and charges income in 2020/21, such as revenue from cultural assets which have been depressed by the pandemic.

The Government continues to monitor the impact of these and other measures and both my department and Arts Council England, the sector's development body, are in regular touch with local authority museums to engage them on such issues.

■ Performing Arts: Coronavirus

Kate Osborne:

[\[90280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much funding has been allocated to the live comedy industry as part of his Department's coronavirus arts funding support package.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Secretary of State provided a major £1.57 billion support package for key cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. Live comedy is a much loved part of the British cultural landscape. Comedy venues and organisations are eligible for support through the package.

The Culture Recovery Fund will provide targeted support to organisations in the cultural and heritage sectors. The Fund is being delivered by Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who are currently considering applications. Announcements about allocations will be made in the coming weeks.

The Live Comedy Association has attended regular ministerially-chaired roundtables that seek to ensure Creative Industries sectors are being assisted as effectively as possible.

We will continue to work with the comedy sector to understand the difficulties the industry faces and help it access support available to address challenges.

■ Pornography: Internet

Fiona Bruce:

[\[90111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, further to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75251, what assessment he has made of the level of risk that commercial pornographic websites will cease to allow user generated content if that would bring those websites within scope of a duty of care in potential future online harms legislation.

Fiona Bruce:

[\[90112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, further to the Answer of 21 July 2020 to Question 75251, whether his Department holds data on which of the fifty most accessed commercial pornography sites in the UK (a) allow user generated content and (b) require payment to access all of the content on their website.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

Fiona Bruce:

[\[91002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government will reconsider implementing Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 in response to the court case brought by several age verification companies, claim number CO/206/2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

I am unable to discuss any ongoing cases against the department.

The Government is committed to ensuring that children are protected from accessing harmful content online. Details of how the online harms legislation will apply to pornography sites, will be published later this year in the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation.

■ Sports: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[90148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what funding his Department allocated to projects to support grassroots sports facilities in Coventry in each of the last two years.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. It is important that grassroots sports facilities remain accessible for people from all backgrounds as we make efforts to return to normality after the Covid lockdown period.

The Government, through Sport England, has invested £932,069 Lottery and Exchequer funding in Coventry for community sports programmes and sport facilities since January 2018.

Sport England has announced an additional £210 million package of financial support to help community sports clubs across the country through the current pandemic. Of this, £126,707 has been invested in Coventry via the Community Emergency Fund.

■ Tourism: Finance

Paul Maynard:

[\[89667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support his Department has provided to (a) Visit Bath and (b) other destination management organisations for the purposes of advertising in the national press.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government awarded funding to a number of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) for the purposes of participating in the Enjoy Summer Safely marketing campaign.

Awards of up to £400,000 were made to successful applicants that had marketing recovery campaign proposals in a high state of preparedness. The Cabinet Office administered the media spend on behalf of successful applicants.

DMOs have provided vital business support to local tourism organisations during this crisis, and will play a key role in helping our tourism industry recover. We will continue to monitor the situation in the tourism sector, and I encourage DMOs to keep sharing information with VisitEngland and my Department.

Rachael Maskell:

[89784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional (a) business and (b) financial support for the tourism industry he has discussed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Rachael Maskell:

[89785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional (a) business and (b) financial support for the hospitality industry he has discussed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Nigel Huddleston:

We are in regular contact with the Treasury regarding the impact of Covid-19 on tourism and hospitality. We continue to monitor the situation and are taking steps to support the sector as it moves to the autumn season.

As well as providing business support and stimulating consumer demand via domestic marketing activity and through the recent Eat Out To Help Out scheme, the Government has implemented a series of financial measures that will assist tourism business over the coming months. This includes the cut to VAT which will last into January and business rates relief for hospitality, retail and leisure businesses, which will last until the end of March.

We are continuing to engage across Government and with stakeholders to assess how we can most effectively support the recovery of tourism and hospitality across the UK.

■ **Yoga: Coronavirus**

Sarah Olney:

[91122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether meditation and yoga classes are defined as exercise and education under the rule of six covid-19 regulations.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity such as yoga play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active.

Organised sporting or licensed physical activity is allowed to continue in groups of more than six. This can be in any public place – indoors or outdoors – or a private outdoor space like a garden; but not inside a private home. This includes exercise

classes, including yoga classes, but social interaction with other participants must be limited.

These activities either need to be organised by a national governing body, club, registered instructor/coach, business or charity; and/or involve someone who has received an official license to use equipment relevant to the activity. In all cases, the organiser must conduct a risk assessment and ensure compliance with COVID-19 Secure guidance.

Government advice showing the rules for sport and physical exercise can be found on the Gov.UK website on [this](#) page

If in doubt, yoga practitioners should ask their national governing body [British Wheel of Yoga](#) for any more detailed advice or guidance.

EDUCATION

■ Extended Services

Fleur Anderson:

[90283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools provided wrap around care in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020; and what funding is available for the provision of wrap around care.

Vicky Ford:

According to the Spring School Census captured the following data, there were 16,161 schools providing school childcare in January 2020. This includes before school, after school, under 5s and holiday childcare either provided on site or signposted to by the school. In 2019, there were 16,073 schools providing the same provisions.

From the start of the autumn term, all schools should work to resume their breakfast and after-school provision, where possible. We have provided guidance to support schools on full opening. The guidance is available at:

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

In addition, the department is investing up to £35 million into the National School Breakfast Programme from March 2018 to March 2021, using funds from Soft Drinks Industry Levy revenues. This includes an extension to the programme by a further year until March 2021 with up to an additional 650 schools being recruited and up to £11.8 million being invested. Overall, this money will kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in up to 2,450 schools in disadvantaged areas, making them sustainable in the long run. There are already more than 1,800 schools benefitting from the programme.

This summer also saw our £9 million Holiday Activities and Food Programme work, across 17 local authority areas, providing thousands of children with access to healthy meals and enriching activities and building on the success of the 2018 and 2019 programmes.

However, we also want to give parents the freedom, support and choice to look after their children in the way that works best for them. That is why from 2021 we will be investing £1 billion to help create more high-quality wraparound and holiday childcare places. We will announce further details on this significant new investment in due course.

The government has also sought to make financial support available to employers and businesses that have found themselves adversely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Wraparound providers adversely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak can find out what financial support is available for their business at:

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

They may be eligible for tax relief, loans or cash grants depending on their circumstances.

■ Free School Meals

Florence Eshalomi: [90312]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals in (a) Vauxhall constituency, (b) Greater London and (c) England.

Vicky Ford:

The department publishes the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals in the Schools, pupils and their characteristics publication, available at:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in January 2020 was 34.5% in Vauxhall constituency compared with 18.8% in Greater London and 17.3% in England as a whole.

■ Free School Meals: Coronavirus

Florence Eshalomi: [90308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, updated on 10 September 2020, when his Department plans to publish further guidance and examples as set out under the heading: if food parcels are needed.

Florence Eshalomi: [90309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, updated on 10 September 2020, for what reason his Department has yet to provide the further guidance referred to under the heading: if food parcels are needed.

Florence Eshalomi: [90310]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's guidance entitled Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, updated on

10 September 2020, what discussions he has had with (a) Public Health England and (b) the Lead Association for Catering in Education on the provision of guidance which includes examples of recommended practice for children requiring free school meals in food parcels.

Florence Eshalomi:

[90311]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals who were unable to access those meals because they were (a) self-isolating and (b) under local lockdown arrangements in each of the last two weeks for which data is available.

Vicky Ford:

We continue to work with stakeholders to provide advice and support to schools. Guidance has been prepared jointly by the Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA), Public Health England and the Department for Education, setting out some general principles for putting together a food parcel, which will allow parents and carers to prepare simple and healthy lunches for their children at home across the week. This guidance is available on LACA's website here:

<https://laca.co.uk/laca-view/free-school-meals-guidance-producing-food-parcels>.

A further updated version of our guidance will be published shortly and the current version is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>.

Now schools and their kitchens are open, normal free school meal provision resumes, enabling children to have a nutritious healthy meal at school. Schools should provide meal options for all pupils who are in school and meals should be available free of charge to all infant pupils and all pupils who meet the benefits-related free school meals eligibility criteria. As set out in our guidance, schools are able to support pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals who have to remain at home due to self-isolation with food parcels.

Approximately 88% of pupils on roll in state-funded schools were in attendance on 10 September. Attendance estimates include pupils absent for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related reasons. Further data on school attendance of free school meal eligible children will be published in due course.

■ Further Education: Coronavirus

Gill Furniss:

[90202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding available to further education colleges to provide remote learning and learning packages to students unable to physically attend those colleges as a result of covid-19.

Gillian Keegan:

During the COVID-19 outbreak, further education colleges have responded swiftly to deliver education to students remotely and many have made enormous strides in the delivery of online learning, for which we are very grateful.

On 31 August 2019, the government announced that an extra £400 million would be invested in 16-19 education in 2020-21. This is the largest injection of money in a single year since 2010 and represents an increase of 7% in overall 16-19 funding. As part of this, the base rate of 16-19 funding will increase by 4.7% in the 2020/21 academic year, from £4,000 to £4,188.

We are also continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34 billion in 2020/21).

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) allocations for 2020 to 2021 have been confirmed, and payments will be made in line with the national profile, which has been confirmed in the relevant 2020 to 2021 funding rules. This should provide the funding certainty required to seek to address the impact of responding to COVID-19.

To support remote learning specifically, we have ensured that colleges are able to gain access to devices and connectivity for students facing financial barriers to participation through the 16-19 Bursary Fund. This was always possible with the 16-19 Bursary Fund and to complement this, we have introduced a change to the ESFA and AEB Funding Rules for the 2020/21 academic year, to enable providers to use their Learner Support funds to purchase IT devices and meet learners' IT connectivity costs.

The department has also funded professional development support for staff to improve their skills and confidence in delivering online learning through funding the Education and Training Foundation and the EdTech Demonstrator Programme which delivers free training for further education providers. We are also funding 7 College Collaboration Fund projects to develop new high-quality digital curriculum content which will begin to be available for use by the sector from the Autumn.

The department is looking carefully at all elements of further educational funding, in preparation for the forthcoming Spending Review.

■ Special Educational Needs**Daisy Cooper:****[88401]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils with an education, health and care plan did not receive a place at one of their choices of (a) primary and (b) secondary school for academic year 2020-21, by local authority.

Daisy Cooper:**[88402]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils with an education, health and care plan are being home educated in each local authority, in academic year 2020-21.

Vicky Ford:

Where a child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan this will name the specific school the child should attend. This will have been decided in consultation with the parents, the local authority, the school and any other interested parties. The specific school named on the EHC plan is required to admit the child. Therefore, the parents do not submit a list of preferred schools for where the EHC plan would apply, as they would for a place at a mainstream school.

The number of pupils with an EHC plan in elective home education at January 2020 has been published at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/4427630d-3082-4144-bc73-39d989ad98ee>.

Figures relating to January 2021 are scheduled to be published in May 2021.

Special Educational Needs: Finance**Mr Richard Holden:****[91166]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the additional funding allocated to primary and secondary aged pupils also applies to special and alternative provision providers.

Vicky Ford:

Special and alternative provision providers are funded through the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. We will provide an additional £730 million of high needs funding next year, coming on top of the additional £780 million in 2020-21, which means high needs budgets will have grown by over £1.5 billion, or 24%, in just 2 years.

We have also announced an additional package worth £1 billion to ensure that schools have the resources they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time, with extra support for those who need it most. £650 million will be spent on ensuring all pupils have the chance to catch up and supporting schools to rise to the challenge. This funding will be paid as a one-off grant to all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in the 2020-21 academic year. Mainstream schools will receive £80 per place, while each special, alternative provision and hospital school will receive £240 for each place, across the 2020-21 academic year. We have applied this additional weighting to specialist settings in recognition of the significantly higher per-pupil costs they face. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium>.

Students: Mental Health**Tom Hunt:****[88407]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of students affected by summer 2020's exam results.

Vicky Ford:

On Monday 17 August, Ofqual confirmed that there no longer would be a standardisation process for AS and A levels or GCSEs. Instead, all students will be

awarded the centre assessment grade submitted by their school or college, unless it is lower than their calculated grade, in which case the calculated grade will stand. Unless there is evidence that a processing error has been made, these grades will be final. This means that students can be certain about their grades as a basis for the next steps in their lives.

Individual young people's mental wellbeing is affected in different ways by issues in their lives. It is important that they receive support where they need it, including from their school. The government has provided a wide range of training and resources to schools and colleges to help them support the wellbeing of their pupils. This includes launching the Wellbeing for Education Return programme which is providing £8 million to local authorities to provide schools and colleges all over England with the knowledge and practical skills they need to support teachers, students and parents, to help improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The training materials include examples of supporting students around loss and disappointment, including over exam results.

This is additional to longer term work to improve support, including the new mental health support teams that we are rolling out across the country, linked to schools and colleges.

The Office for Students (OfS) have provided up to £3 million to fund the Student Space platform to bridge gaps in mental health support for students. Student Space is a collaborative mental health resource to support students at English and Welsh universities through the unique circumstances created by the COVID-19 outbreak. It provides a range of information, access to dedicated support services (phone or text), details of the support available at each university, and tools to help students manage the challenges of student life.

The government has also worked closely with the OfS to help clarify that higher education providers can draw upon existing funding to provide hardship funds and support disadvantaged students impacted by COVID-19. Providers are able to use the OfS student premium funding worth around £256 million for 2020-21 academic year starting from August towards student hardship funds, including the purchase of mental health support.

■ Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund

Rachael Maskell:

[88909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much of the Vulnerable children fund has been allocated to organisations to date; and how much each organisation has received.

Vicky Ford:

In April 2020, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced £750 million funding for frontline charities dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of this funding £360 million was allocated to government departments for distribution to charities providing key services that support vulnerable

people. Of that funding, the Department for Education (DfE) was allocated and is currently distributing a total of £26.4 million.

The attached table details the grants that have been awarded from the £26.4 million.

Payments to all the above organisations are processed and final payments are expected through September to November. Over 50% of the Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund has been distributed and payments to complete distribution of funds are on track.

Attachments:

1. 8809_table [88909 table showing funding for charities.doc]

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Beverage Containers: Recycling

Fleur Anderson:

[\[88938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the impact assessment that will be published alongside the second consultation on a deposit return scheme will include an analysis of the potential for consumers to switch from aluminium cans in multi-packs to large plastic bottles due to the cumulative impact of the fee.

Rebecca Pow:

We will seek further evidence on consumer purchasing habits as a result of the introduction of a deposit return scheme as part of our forthcoming consultation planned for early 2021. The impact on multipack purchases will not be fully analysed in our consultation-stage Impact Assessment as we do not currently have sufficient evidence to be able to model the impact in detail.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Derbyshire

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[88883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many badger vaccination sites in Derbyshire will be both (a) close to new badger cull zones and (b) unable to apply for buffer zones.

Victoria Prentis:

There are currently 47 active vaccination sites within Derbyshire, 10 of which are eligible for a buffer and 37 sites are ineligible for no-cull zones.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[88880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ensure that badgers vaccinated against bovine TB through Government-funded badger vaccination programmes in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and

Warwickshire will not be culled during the extension of the badger cull to 11 additional areas of England.

Victoria Prentis:

Vaccination sites within Edge Area counties and that meet specific criteria will have no-cull zones surrounding them if a Badger Disease Control licence is issued for land adjacent to such a vaccination site. Specific details on no-cull zones can be found in Defra's guidance to Natural England published on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-natural-england-preventing-spread-of-bovine-tb>.

Daniel Zeichner:

[88881]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect an expansion of badger culling to Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire will have on the ability of the Government-funded badger vaccination programmes in those counties to (a) continue and (b) expand their operations.

Victoria Prentis:

Existing Government-funded badger edge vaccination schemes will be able to continue operations where licensing conditions for vaccination are met. Scheme holders should continue to work with land owners to expand their operations in the areas agreed with Defra.

Daniel Zeichner:

[88882]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reasons landowners who have previously utilised Government-funded badger vaccination programmes are allowed to apply to cull those badgers.

Victoria Prentis:

It is the decision of farmers and landowners as to whether they utilise badger vaccination or culling to help control bovine TB. Vaccination may be used independently or in combination with culling as part of a package of measures to prevent or control bovine TB.

Daniel Zeichner:

[88884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the expansion of badger culls to 11 new areas of England, what estimate his Department has made of (a) the number of badgers that will be culled in 2020, (b) the number of badgers that will have been culled by the end of 2020 since the introduction of culling in 2013 and (c) the proportion of the national badger population that will have been culled by the end of 2020 since the introduction of culling in 2013.

Victoria Prentis:

The minimum and maximum number of badgers to be culled in 2020 can be found on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-natural-england-on-setting-minimum-and-maximum-numbers-of-badgers-to-be-controlled-in-2020>.

The number of badgers culled between 2013 and 2020 is as follows:

YEAR	NUMBER OF BADGERS CULLED
2013	1869
2014	615
2015	1467
2016	10886
2017	19537
2018	32934
2019	35034

The estimated badger population of England in 2011-2014 was 424,000. The number of badgers culled each year to 2019 has varied between 0.1% and 8.3% of this estimate.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Gloucestershire

Daniel Zeichner: [\[88878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many badgers vaccinated against bovine TB were culled during the 2019 badger cull in Gloucestershire; and whether there has been an investigation by the Government on how and why any vaccinated badgers were culled.

Victoria Prentis:

We have no information on the numbers of badgers culled in Gloucestershire in 2019 that may have been previously vaccinated. From this year vaccination sites located wholly or partially in the TB zone designated as the Edge Area that meet minimum criteria can benefit from no-cull zones around the vaccination site. Although vaccination with BCG will not guarantee protection from infection, meaning some badgers may still become infected, various studies provide good evidence of beneficial effects. Relevant information can be found on the TB Hub website.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[88879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether during the 2019 badger cull in Gloucestershire there was a buffer zone established around Woodchester Park to prevent the culling of badgers vaccinated against bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

Badgers in Woodchester Park are not vaccinated against bovine TB and therefore a no-cull zone was not established around Woodchester Park in 2019.

■ Dogs: Sales

Olivia Blake:

[\[91194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Lucy's Law on banning third-party puppy sales since that Law was introduced in April 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

The ban on commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens in England, also known as Lucy's Law, came into force in April 2020. My department has not been informed of any cases of action being taken against third party sellers breaking the law since its introduction. However, we would expect reports of any such cases to be reported to the relevant local authorities, as enforcers of the legislation.

Defra recognises that raising awareness of deceitful sellers is another integral step towards tackling low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies. That is why we launched the communications campaign "Petfished" in March 2020 to raise the public's awareness of the consequences of buying from a low-welfare seller and challenging the assumption that it is easy to spot bad practice. The campaign also signposts to resources available to help them make a good decision and source from responsible breeders or rehoming centres in the UK. We have increased and tailored campaign activity over recent months to further encourage responsible buying during the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ Fish: Exports

Luke Pollard:

[\[90313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the European Commission's procedure for listing the UK for fish exports into the EU requires audit of the UK's health certification systems and checks; and whether that audit will be required before the UK receives approval.

Victoria Prentis:

The Commission's own guidance on EU import and transit rules for live animals and animal products from third countries requires us to satisfy health certification laid down in relevant legislation. This would be Reg. (EU) 2017/625 otherwise known as the Official Controls Regulations.

■ Fisheries

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[88943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that businesses in the fishing industry are not adversely affected by (a) increased administrative requirements and (b) potential tariffs in the event that an agreement is not reached on a future relationship with the EU by the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is clear that it wants to secure a Canada-style free trade deal with the EU which has at its heart a zero tariff trading regime.

At the end of the transition period, the UK will leave the EU's customs area and the EU's single market which means that traders will have to comply with new processes to trade with the EU, whether or not we reach an agreement with the EU.

Planning for the end of the transition period is well underway and the Government is working closely with businesses and other partners across the UK to ensure that the trade of seafood with the EU can continue as smoothly as possible.

■ Fisheries Bill (HL)**Virginia Crosbie:**[\[88945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Fisheries Bill on (a) fisher employment levels (b) access to healthy food sources and (c) food security.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries management is of course devolved. The extent to which the benefits of the Fisheries Bill and the fisheries negotiations on access and quota will be felt across the UK, will largely be a matter for each fisheries Administration.

The Joint Fisheries Statement will provide an opportunity to describe how the Administrations will jointly or individually as appropriate deliver policies to achieve the eight fisheries objectives in the Bill. The objectives cover fish as a food source and the national benefit objective.

In England, we will shortly be consulting on strengthening the economic link criteria to ensure the UK benefits from the additional quota we intend to negotiate to secure for the UK. This will boost opportunities for fishers.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been promising signs that the public are eating more locally caught fish. The "Sea for Yourself" campaign being run jointly by the Sea Fish Industry Authority and Defra aims to increase consumption of seafood caught in UK waters.

■ Fisheries: Marine Protected Areas**Alex Sobel:**[\[90227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of fishing by supertrawlers in Marine Protected Areas; and whether those supertrawlers are planned to be banned from Marine Protected Areas once the UK leaves the EU Common Fisheries Policy.

Victoria Prentis:

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

When the transition period ends we will be able to restrict the fishing activities of all vessels, including supertrawlers, throughout our waters. The UK will be able to decide which vessels can access our waters and the new licensing framework within the Fisheries Bill will allow us to apply conditions to the activities of all vessels fishing in UK waters. Any vessels granted access to fish in our waters, regardless of nationality, will need to abide by UK rules including those on sustainability.

The Marine Management Organisation monitors activity to ensure fishing boats are complying with current rules and will ensure compliance with new measures as they are introduced.

Not all fishing activities within Marine Protected Areas will require management, only those likely to damage the designated features, such as trawling on the seabed. 'Supertrawlers' generally target fish within the water column and are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats for which most Marine Protected Areas are designated.

■ Fisheries: Ynys Môn

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[88944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to support the fishing industry in Ynys Môn constituency.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries management is largely devolved and specific measures to support local industry would be a matter for each Fisheries Administration.

The introduction of the Fisheries Bill will allow the four Fisheries Administrations to reform the management of fisheries over time, creating a flexible and adaptive regime that is better suited to the individual needs of our fisheries. Defra has worked very closely with the Devolved Administrations during the development of the Fisheries Bill. At their requests, the Bill contains significant new powers for the Devolved Administrations that in most cases mirror those of the Secretary of State.

The UK Government will put in place new, domestic, long-term arrangements to support the UK's fishing industry from 2021, through the creation of four new schemes comparable to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund to deliver funding for each nation.

Seafish is working with industry from across the UK to develop a tool box of measures that can be used to better manage inshore fisheries and to develop more effective management for shellfish.

■ Flood Control

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[90204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department has spent on flood defence by region in the UK in the last 12 months.

Rebecca Pow:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

Defra provides most of its funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) to the Environment Agency (EA) as grant-in-aid, which is the mechanism for financing non-departmental public bodies such as the EA. The EA spends this funding directly on managing flood risk, but it also passes some of this funding on as capital grants for flood or coastal erosion defence improvements to local authorities or Internal Drainage Boards.

The EA allocated capital grant-in-aid for 2019/20 per Office for National Statistics (ONS) region as follows. This information is a forecast only, based on the EA's current consented FCERM investment programme (approved and published in April 2019).

ONS REGION	2019/20£
East Midlands	67,321,698
East of England	55,614,346
London	40,116,579
North East	10,119,997
North West	58,167,332
South East	58,641,225
South West	39,507,690
West Midlands	32,554,347
Yorkshire and the Humber	117,484,419

■ Flowers: Import Duties

Nicola Richards:[\[90307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on fresh flower sellers of potential tariff imposition in the event that an agreement is not reached on a future relationship with the EU by the end of the transition period.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK Government intends to achieve an FTA with the EU by December 2020. We therefore do not expect the UK Global Tariff (UKGT) to apply to EU imports. The Political Declaration sets an aim for "a zero tariff and zero quota FTA". We would like

to achieve that. Reducing the cost pressures and processes associated with trade is in the interests of people and businesses across the UK.

The Government wants a free trade deal, based on friendly cooperation. The UK is a significant importer of goods from the EU, and avoiding tariffs would be beneficial to both sides, given our shared commitment to high regulatory standards. We will publish more analysis in the Taxation Information and Impact Note (TIIN) alongside the legislation, as is standard practice.

■ Food: Charities

Rachael Maskell:

[88912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the press release, £16 million for food charities to provide meals for those in need, published on 8 May 2020, how much has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by provider organisations to date.

Victoria Prentis:

£16 million has been allocated to support front-line food charities. To date, £13.3 million has been received by provider organisations.

■ Hen Harriers: Conservation

Alex Sobel:

[90234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to combat the illegal shooting of hen harriers associated with grouse shooting; and what plans he has to restore hen harrier populations throughout the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Blaydon on 8 September, PQ UIN 82283.

[questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/82283]

■ Tourist Attractions: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[88914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much of the £14m allocated for zoos and aquariums in response to Covid-19 has been (a) allocated to and (b) received (i) in total and (ii) for each zoo and aquarium.

Victoria Prentis:

Over £2.2 million was allocated to and received by zoos and aquariums under the £14 million Zoo Support Fund, which was active until the end of July 2020. The spend category for each zoo is listed below. The £100 million Zoo Animals Fund was subsequently launched at the beginning of August 2020. Zoos and aquariums can currently receive a grant of up to around £730,000 to pay for animal welfare related costs and essential maintenance. The deadline for applications for support from the

new fund is 16 November 2020 and we encourage all eligible establishments to apply.

ZOOS AWARDED UP TO £10K TAMAR OTTER AND WILDLIFE CENTRE PREDATOR EXPERIENCE OASIS CAMEL PARK THE FALCONRY CENTRE LTD. EXOTIC ZOO WILDLIFE PARK ILFRACOMBE AQUARIUM LTD. XTREME FALCONRY LIBERTY'S OWL, RAPTOR AND REPTILE CENTRE ZOO 2 UHAVEN FALCONRY BIRD OF PREY CENTRE THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF FALCONRY KIRKLEATHAM OWL CENTRE SCREECH OWL SANCTUARY

Zoos awarded between £10k and up to £25k Becky Falls Ancient Woodland Park Limited Wild Discovery Avon Valley Country Park Ltd. Ventura Wildlife Park Porfell Wildlife Park and Sanctuary Raptor Foundation Cheshire Falconry Ltd. Coda Falconry Simply Native Ltd. Paradise Park Cornwall Hoo Farm and Animal Kingdom

Zoos awarded between £25k and up to £50k Jurassic Encounters/Ark Wildlife Park The Leaf Foundation Woodside Wildlife Park Chew Valley Animal Park Ltd. Lake District Wildlife Park The New Forest Wildlife Park Green Dragon Rare Breeds Farm National Centre for Birds of Prey Battersea Park Children's Zoo Tropiquaria Zoo Ponderosa R T C Bendalls Leisure Ltd. HR Phillpot and Son – Barleylands Ltd.

Zoos awarded between £50k and up to £75k Teen Spirit Shepreth Wildlife Park Island Amazon Adventure Brazilia Ltd. Sealife Adventure The Whitehouse Centre Wildwood Escot The Parrot Zoo Trust Smithills Open Farm Ltd. Old Macdonald's Farm and Fun Park Ltd.

Zoos awarded between £75k and up to £100k Cumbria Zoo Dartmoor Zoological Society Combe Martin Wildlife and Dinosaur Park Exmoor Zoological Park White Post Farm Trust for Sustainable Living The Essex Pig Company Hamerton Zoological Park Noah's Ark Zoo

■ UK Trade with EU: Agriculture

Anthony Mangnall:

[90269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help prepare the farming sector for the possibility of the transition period ending with the UK trading with the EU on World Trade Organisation terms.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK Government intends to achieve an FTA with the EU by December 2020. We therefore do not expect the UKGT to apply to EU imports. The Political Declaration sets an aim for "a zero tariff and zero quota FTA". We would like to achieve that. Reducing the cost pressures and processes associated with trade is in the interests of people and businesses across the UK.

On 31 December 2020, the transition period will end and there will be a guaranteed series of changes and opportunities for which business and the Government need to prepare. Many of these changes will be required regardless of the agreement we reach with the European Union on our future trade relationship because the UK will

be leaving the single market and customs union and regaining its political and economic independence.

Through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group (UKAMMG), Defra and the Devolved Administrations continue to monitor the market situation across various agricultural commodities. The group will enable us to remain agile and to identify, and respond as required, to any unforeseen impacts at the end of the transition period.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Armed Conflict: Yemen**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[90981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has responded to the 9 September 2020 report of the UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has reviewed the latest report by the UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen and we are deeply concerned by its findings. We urge the parties to the conflict to cooperate fully with the Group's work, and to promote and protect human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in Yemen. Yemen is a Human Rights Priority Country for the FCDO. We take the alleged violations of IHL and violations and abuses of human rights in the report extremely seriously.

■ **Bahrain: Human Rights**

Chris Law:

[\[90155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reported rise in the number of political prisoners at imminent risk of execution in Bahrain, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UK Official Development Assistance provided to Bahrain to support human rights in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK does not provide Official Development Assistance to Bahrain. The technical assistance we provide is kept under regular review to ensure compliance with our human rights obligations and the Overseas Security and Justice Assistance process.

■ **British Council**

Mr John Baron:

[\[90059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will set out the (a) terms of reference and (b) progress of his review of the British Council; and if he will publish a (i) financial recovery plan and (ii) long-term funding settlement for the British Council.

Nigel Adams:

The internal review of the British Council is ongoing. Officials continue to work closely with the Council to address the impact of Covid-19 on its operations. Further decisions about long-term funding for the Council will be taken at the upcoming Spending Review.

■ **Corruption: Sanctions****Mr Andrew Mitchell:**[\[90055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the timetable is for the scope of the Magnitsky regime to be extended to encompass corruption abuses; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

On 6 July the UK Government established the Global Human Rights ('Magnitsky') sanctions regime by laying regulations in Parliament under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. This sanctions regime enables the UK to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses.

As the Foreign Secretary announced to the House, work is underway to consider how a corruption regime could be added to our armoury. Sanctions are powerful tools, capable of having a significant impact, and complex to design. We are taking the time to ensure we get them right.

■ **Developing Countries: Carbon Emissions****Harriett Baldwin:**[\[87538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the reduction in CO2 emissions funded by UKAid climate finance outside the UK in each of the last 10 years.

James Duddridge:

Between 2011/12 and 2019/20 work supported through UK International Climate Finance (ICF) reduced or avoided 31,000,000 metric tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (tCO2e). The full set of results achieved through UK ICF is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/911393/ICF-Results-Publication-2020.pdf

Annual figures for each of the last ten years are not available.

■ **Developing Countries: Coronavirus****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[88379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any private hospitals in receipt of funding from his Department have made a profit during the covid-19 outbreak.

Wendy Morton:

The UK government works with public and private sector partners, both for-profit and not-for-profit (including faith-based organisations) as part of mixed health systems in developing countries, to support efforts to offer affordable, high quality health services, and to respond to COVID-19. The over-riding procurement policy applied by the FCDO in working with private providers is driven by ensuring value for money.

The FCDO requires all partners to provide full cost transparency throughout the lifecycle of its programmes.

Education: Females**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[89663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when (a) existing and (b) planned girls' education programmes have been paused or cancelled as a result of the change in the level of Official Development Assistance in 2020.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: Championing 12 years of quality education for all girls is a top priority for this Government and the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls has become increasingly clear and the focus on girls' education across the world is more important than ever.

Difficult decisions have been necessary to identify the savings needed to ensure we meet the 0.7 per cent Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment this year. The Foreign Secretary chaired a review process across government looking at all strands of the ODA budget, evaluating the impacts of spend and making sure the UK can maintain operational capacity. This process has made sure there is continued support and commitment to ODA priorities, including girls' education.

EU Countries: Visas**Patricia Gibson:**[\[86689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made on discussions to secure the expansion of visa-free travel between the UK and EU.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The Government has discussed mobility arrangements across a number of areas as part of negotiations on our future relationship with the EU.

The EU has already legislated such that UK nationals will not need a visa when travelling to the Schengen area for short stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This will apply from the end of the transition period to all UK nationals travelling to and within the Schengen area for purposes such as tourism.

This is the standard length of stay that the EU provides to the nationals of eligible third countries that offer visa-free travel access for EU citizens, in line with existing EU legislation.

As things stand, stays beyond the EU's 90/180 day visa-free allocation from 1 January 2021 onwards will be for individual Member States to decide and implement through domestic entry rules and visa arrangements for non-EU citizens. UK nationals will need to discuss the specifics of their situation with the relevant Member State authorities and should be prepared to provide any extra documentation that may be required.

■ Food Supply: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[82258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on levels of hunger throughout the world; and what steps he is taking to prevent levels of hunger from increasing.

James Duddridge:

Food security has been deteriorating in many countries since 2015, due to conflict, climate change, shocks such as locusts, and economic slowdowns. COVID-19 is making this much worse and may also drive new hunger hotspots.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has adapted development programmes in agriculture, nutrition and food security, to help reduce the scale of a major food security emergency, build resilience and prepare for a sustainable recovery. The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office is working with partners to strengthen global food security governance, and monitoring and analysis.

The Foreign Secretary has appointed the UK's first ever Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, who will work in partnership with other donors, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and foundations to help prevent catastrophic famine. We are a leading donor to the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan and working to ensure assistance reaches those most in need. This is in addition to a £119m package to combat the threat of famine.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Females

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[86008]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will ensure continued UK leadership, investment, and evidence-based programming across the former Department for International Development's Strategic Vision's five foundation areas of (a) violence against women and girls, (b) sexual and reproductive health and rights, (c) girls' education, (d) women's economic empowerment and (e) women's political empowerment.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is widely known as a world leader on gender equality. We fought successfully for a dedicated gender equality goal in the SDGs and targets on gender equality across the other goals. We continue to deliver results at scale. For example, between 2015 and 2020, we enabled 8.1 million girls gain access to a decent education, and in 2019-20 alone we supported 25.4 million women to access modern methods of family planning, helping to save thousands of lives.

The FCDO will build on this strong track record, bringing together our diplomacy and development expertise to be a progressive force for women and girls.

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.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Gender**Liz Saville Roberts:****[82219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure delivery on the aims of the Strategic Vision for Gender Equality.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 3 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.

Substantial progress has been made since the launch of the Strategic Vision in 2018. Highlights include announcing the biggest ever donor commitment to support and accelerate the Africa-led movement to end female genital mutilation (£50 million), securing unilateral agreement by the 53 Commonwealth Leaders to work to ensure 12 years of quality education for all girls by 2030, and generating world-leading evidence on how to drive down global rates of violence against women and girls through our *What Works to Prevent Violence* programme. Between 2019-20 alone UKaid supported 25.4 million women to access modern methods of family planning, helping to save thousands of lives.

As part of the launch of the new FCDO, 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.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[86005]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) girls' education, (b) women's economic empowerment, (c) the women, peace and security agenda and (d) other gender equality policies are a core priority for his Department.

Wendy Morton:

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. The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to this agenda.

The new FCDO will continue to be a progressive force women and girls, including for their right to education, addressing the barriers to economic empowerment and promoting their meaningful participation in peace processes. We will work closely with partners across HMG to leverage the best development, diplomatic, defence and trade approaches to achieve maximum impact.

The UK International Development Act (Gender Equality) 2014 also makes a consideration of gender equality in all UK Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) a legal requirement. The Act puts our commitment to gender equality within ODA spend on a statutory footing and ensures that gender equality remains at the heart of our work.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Appointments

Yasmin Qureshi:

[89665]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to appoint a new FCDO Special Envoy for Gender Equality.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: Gender equality is a core part of the FCDO's work as a force for good in the world. The UK has a proud track record in a number of areas. For example, the right of every girl around the world to receive 12 years of quality education remains a top priority. The Prime Minister appointed Baroness Sugg as the UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, we supported 8.1 million girls gain access to a decent education. The Strategic Vision for Gender Equality reflects and responds to the UK Government's ambitions and works alongside our National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security. As part of creation of the FCDO we will be building on existing strategies and reviewing structures and roles, including that of the Special Envoy for Gender Equality.

In 2019 the UK announced the biggest ever investment of £67.5 million by a single Government to prevent violence against women and girls. We are recognised internationally for our leadership on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative to which we have committed £46 million since 2012, supporting over 85 projects across 29 countries. We also continue to reach girls and women with life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, including with an additional £10

million for UN Population Fund's COVID-19 response . We will mark the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in October with the support of HRH The Countess of Wessex, HMG's champion on Women Peace and Security and the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. The FCDO network will mark the anniversary, focusing on elevating and legitimising the work of women peacebuilders. We are also supporting the International Civil Society Action Network's Protection Framework for Women Peacebuilders which will provide guidance to states and multilateral organisations on how to prevent and respond to reprisals against women peacebuilders.

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

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[86007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department will have staff dedicated to gender equality and sexual and reproductive health.

Wendy Morton:

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. As part of this, we are committed to defending comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights and we will continue to be a progressive voice on this issue.

The merger fuses the best of our development expertise and world-leading diplomacy together, in a new department. All of the things that have made the UK a world leader in development will not change i.e. our thought leadership; the scale and quality of UK development programmes; and excellence of our analysis, long term perspective and staff.

Organisational plans for the new department are currently being shaped but I can confirm that gender has been specifically identified as an area of focus within the new leadership structure. The full details of the merger, including the structure of the new department, will be set out in due course.

■ **France: Migrant Camps**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[89652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to his counterpart in France on the recent evictions of refugees from camps in (a) Calais and (b) Dunkirk.

Wendy Morton:

The relocation of vulnerable individuals into reception centres remains an issue of domestic responsibility for the French Government. The Home Secretary and her department lead on and work closely with French authorities to manage the migratory pressures at our joint border. The UK is in regular discussion with France in support of our 'whole of route' approach to tackling irregular migration.

■ Government Departments: Data Protection**Layla Moran:****[89826]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking with other Departments to protect the UK from cyber security breaches carried out by (a) Russia and (b) other countries.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: We are vigilant to these threats, wherever they come from, and ready to defend against them through the world-leading National Cyber Security Centre and investing £1.9 billion through the National Cyber Security Strategy. We have made the UK a hard target and raised the cost for those who would do us harm. We prepare so that we can respond effectively to minimise loss or disruption should they get through. We work closely with allies to deter, mitigate and attribute malicious cyber activity. The best way to deny states and others the opportunity to cause disruption is for organisations and individuals to reduce the chances of their data being stolen, working with our National Cyber Security Centre. As cyberspace is essentially borderless, any mitigations or solutions need to be international - it is a foreign policy issue as much as a technical one.

■ Government Departments: Wines**Andrew Griffith:****[88953]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government Wine Cellar has to increase its proportion of English wine purchases.

Wendy Morton:

The proportion of English wines purchased for the Government Hospitality wine cellar varies year on year, but generally increases eg. in 2018-19 49% of the wine purchased was English or Welsh. In 2019-20 that proportion increased to 73% of the wine purchased.

■ Greece: Migrant Camps**Ms Lyn Brown:****[89653]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of the fires in the Moria refugee camp on the island of Lesbos which began on the 8 September 2020.

Wendy Morton:

A fire on 8 September, and subsequent fires, destroyed the Moria migrant camp on the Greek island of Lesbos (also known as Lesbos), which sheltered over 12,500 migrants. There were no reported fatalities. Greece declared a State of Emergency, and the UNHCR deployed staff on the ground to assist the Greek authorities. My thoughts are with all those affected, and I commend the swift action taken by the Greek emergency services to put out the fires.

Neil Coyle:

[\[91065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance his Department is providing to the Greek Government to help the acquisition of accommodation for vulnerable women and children who have been affected by the fire in the Moria refugee camp.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is responding to requests by the Greek Government to provide specific humanitarian goods and are urgently making plans for the delivery of these goods. We will work with our partners to ensure these supplies are fairly distributed and reach those most in need.

■ Greece: Refugees

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[89654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the conditions for refugees living in the Moria refugee camp on the Island of Lesbos.

Wendy Morton:

Following the devastating fire, which destroyed the Moria refugee camp, the Greek Government has set up a new provisional camp in Kara Tepe (near Moria) that has an initial capacity of 3,000 places. Migrants are tested for Covid-19 before they enter and register with the authorities. If found positive, they are moved to a special facility for quarantine. The Greek government also sent a passenger ferry and two navy ships immediately after the fires to accommodate homeless migrants, transferred 409 unaccompanied children to mainland Greece, and provided water, food and other items to homeless migrants.

■ Haiti: Elections

Janet Daby:

[\[88929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the government of Haiti in establishing conditions for a fair and transparent election process.

Wendy Morton:

The UK continues to monitor developments in Haiti. We support the work being done by the UN and others to take forward the electoral process. We hope that this will enable credible elections to take place so that democratic institutions can be restored in the country as soon as possible.

■ Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy

Stephen Farry:

[\[83977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reasons the call for evidence on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence,

Development and Foreign Policy did not expressly include (a) the promotion of democracy and (b) the protection of human rights.

James Cleverly:

At the start of the Integrated Review, the Prime Minister said that the Review will set out how the United Kingdom will be a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation. He also highlighted the importance of our values. This includes standing up for democracy and human rights.

The Call for Evidence invites the public to submit evidence to inform the Integrated Review. Its aim is to invite a broad range of submissions without prejudging which themes or issues should receive particular consideration at this stage.

Her Majesty's Government is committed to an open and inclusive review that utilises a wide range of expertise and challenges traditional Whitehall assumptions and thinking.

■ **Iran: Capital Punishment**

Mr David Jones:

[\[89622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Iranian authorities on the execution of Navid Afkari.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The execution of Navid Afkari by the Iranian authorities was deplorable. The UK Government made clear its public condemnation of the action on 12 September. The UK Government is firmly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances and in every country, as a matter of principle, and we unreservedly support the right to peaceful protest. Iran's human rights record is of serious and longstanding concern to the UK. The continued use of the death penalty, weak rule of law and restrictions on freedoms of expression remain deeply worrying. We regularly raise human rights with the Iranians at all levels and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

■ **Iran: Human Rights**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[89680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the Amnesty International report entitled *Trampling humanity: Mass arrests, disappearances and torture since Iran's 2019 November protests*, published 2 September 2020.

James Cleverly:

The findings in Amnesty International's report about the November 2019 protests are deeply worrying. Iran's human rights record continues to be of serious concern to the UK. As we said at the time, we unreservedly support the right to peaceful protest, and call on Iran to uphold its commitments under international law to protect freedom of assembly and speech. The UK is committed to holding Iran to account on a wide

range of human rights issues, through contact with the Iranian Government and internationally through the UN and our likeminded partners. We regularly raise human rights with the Iranians at all levels and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor record on all human rights issues.

■ Iran: Uranium

Robert Halfon:

[\[91006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his P5+1 counterparts on the report of 4 September 2020 from the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran's stockpile of uranium is over 10 times the limit agreed in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly:

Preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon is critical for our collective security. The Government remains deeply concerned by Iran's growing uranium stockpile and by Iran's actions to break other Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action limits. This is why the UK, with France and Germany, triggered the deal's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) on 14 January. E3 Foreign Ministers discuss this regularly, including most recently at their meeting on 10 September. The findings of the International Atomic Energy Agency's report of 4 September was discussed at the Board of Governors meeting on 15 September, where the UK, France and Germany set out our concerns about the size of Iran's stockpile. We remain committed to working with partners to use the DRM to find a diplomatic way forward.

■ Israel and West Bank: Religious Freedom

Sir John Hayes:

[\[88819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to secure religious freedom for Arab Christians in (a) Israel and (b) the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

Freedom of Religion or Belief is a human rights priority for the UK Government. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem raise issues of religious freedom with the Israeli Government and Palestinian Authority. The UK recognises that Jerusalem holds particular significance for many groups, especially the three Abrahamic faiths.

■ Israel: Arab States

Robert Halfon:

[\[91005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on helping Israel develop further diplomatic ties with Arab states following its normalisation agreements with the UAE and Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

During his visit to Israel on 24 August, the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs met Prime Minister Netanyahu, Alternate Prime Minister and Defence Minister Gantz, and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi. They discussed normalisation of relations in the region, alongside a range of other bilateral, regional, security issues. We warmly welcome the agreement between Israel, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. This is an historic step which sees the normalisation of relations between three great friends of the UK.

■ **Kenya: Al Shabaab****Carla Lockhart:**[\[89884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 6147 on Kenya: al Shabaab, what progress is being made on the development of a counter-IED capability with a regional Centre of Excellence based in Nairobi.

James Duddridge:

As stated in PQ 6147 of 28 January, the UK and Kenya are close partners in the fight against global terrorism, and strengthening our counterterrorism cooperation is a priority under the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership. To tackle the threat posed by Al Shabaab, the UK Government provides the Kenyan authorities with a range of support to develop their counter terrorism capabilities. This includes partnering in the development of counter-IED capability with a regional Centre of Excellence based in Nairobi that benefits the whole region. The Centre's main objective is to strengthen the counter-IED capability of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Since 2016, and with £13 million of Conflict Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) funding to date, the UK and Kenya have together delivered training at the Centre to more than 1,700 military and police personnel from 22 Troop Contributing Countries. The programme in Kenya transitioned to 100% African-led instruction this year, and achieved a major milestone in January with the IED Search course led by Kenya Defence Force instructors for the first time. Counter-IED training was paused from March to July due to COVID-19, but has since resumed.

■ **Lebanon: Palestinians****Rushanara Ali:**[\[85044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

James Cleverly:

Palestinian refugees are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in Lebanon. The deteriorating economic conditions have further increased the risk that limited job opportunities will push the most vulnerable, including women, girls and young people, into harmful survival strategies.

Managing the spread of coronavirus is a top priority, with currently over 230 recorded cases amongst Palestinian refugees and active transmission in the wider Lebanese population. UNRWA is working with partners to balance continuity of care with provision of support to education and primary health care facilities.

This financial year the UK has provided £34.5m to UNRWA in addition to the over £710 million of UK humanitarian, development and stability funding to Lebanon since 2011, including to Palestinian camps.

■ Mexico: Freedom of Religion

Fiona Bruce:

[\[89674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of freedom of religion or belief in Mexico.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: The Mexican Constitution guarantees freedom of religion or belief for all its citizens. States as well as federal officials have responsibility for ensuring non-discrimination, and we welcome the 2019 launch of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Respect and Tolerance of Religious Diversity. The assessment by the Mexican Government, the local UN Human Rights office, and local civil society organisations is that while there are some cases of individuals being targeted because of their religion or beliefs, people are more often targeted for their work and activities in defence of human rights or because of religious intolerance between faith groups in Mexico.

The UK Government continues to engage regularly with Mexican authorities at ministerial, official, and state level to discuss human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief, and to support a broad human rights agenda in Mexico. On 28 July, Lord Ahmad, the Minister for human rights, discussed human rights with his Mexican counterpart.

■ Mexico: Protestantism

Fiona Bruce:

[\[89675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on freedom of religion or belief of the case of six Protestant Christian families in El Encanto village, Las Margaritas Municipality, Chiapas Mexico, who had their electricity cut off on 27 July 2020 because they refused to sign an agreement which obliged them to participate in religious activities associated with the Catholic religion and to help with the upkeep of the local Catholic church building.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 17 September 2020]: We are aware of reports of the removal of some Mexican Protestants' access to water, electricity, and other basic services in Mexico, and have raised this specific case with the Mexican authorities. The overall assessment by the Mexican Government, the local UN Human Rights office, and

local civil society organisations is that, while there are some cases of individuals being targeted because of their religion or beliefs, people are more often targeted for their work and activities in defence of human rights or because of religious intolerance between faith groups in Mexico. We will continue to raise our concerns when we become aware of such cases. The UK Government continues to engage regularly with Mexican authorities at ministerial, official, and state level to discuss human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief, and to support a broad human rights agenda in Mexico.

■ Middle East and North Africa: Overseas Aid

Anna McMorris:

[82295]

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

James Cleverly:

Programme plans for the delivery of £639.2 million ODA funding in the Middle East and North Africa were published in financial year 2020/21. This figure excludes Conflict, Stability and Security Funds.

Revised ODA allocations for 2020/21 will be published by HM Treasury at Autumn Budget. The Statistics for International Development published in 2021 will provide a full breakdown of the UK's ODA spend for 2020.

■ Overseas Aid: Coronavirus

Liz Saville Roberts:

[90197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK aid reaches the most vulnerable people during the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

COVID-19 is a compound and protracted crisis, where the impacts on health, economies, food security, stability and society will hit the world's poorest and most fragile countries hardest. As a leading donor to the global COVID-19 response and one of the biggest humanitarian donors globally, we are ensuring that our support goes to those who need it the most, including refugees and other forcibly displaced populations.

We have so far pledged up to £790 million of UK aid to counter the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, and to further the search for vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. In addition, we have pivoted over 200 bilateral programmes towards addressing direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 response.

We are paying particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable. Our funding for UNHCR is focused on supporting refugees. Our support to UNFPA and UNICEF will protect the rights of women and girls, including addressing gender-based violence

and ensuring continued access to sexual and reproductive health care. We have also recently announced a package of £119 million to provide relief to over six million people and help prevent famine in countries hit by conflict and COVID-19.

■ Overseas Aid: Freedom of Religion

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[90198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of discrimination against religious minorities on the distribution of UK aid.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government works to ensure that recipients of UK Aid, including minority religious communities, are not discriminated against because of their faith. The UK is committed to delivering its aid according to internationally-recognised humanitarian principles. These principles ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered to those who are most vulnerable and most in need of this assistance irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. This includes minority religious communities, who are assessed by our partners when determining those most in need of protection and assistance.

The FCDO's use of country context analysis has increased the understanding of how religious dynamics and religious groups are factored into all of our country programmes. The FCDO undertakes interdisciplinary analysis of a country's politics, society, state and economy to identify the most significant problems that hinder development and the main entry points and opportunities to create change. There is a strong emphasis on how politics, security, and demographics interact with economic growth and human development. This includes the role of religion and discrimination of religious minorities.

■ Overseas Aid: Payments

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[82260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to maintain the Department for International Development commitment to more than double its use of cash and vouchers to 32 per cent by 2025.

James Duddridge:

The UK supports the use of cash in humanitarian response as an effective, efficient, and accountable way of helping people affected by crisis meet a range of basic needs. Some humanitarian assistance is currently delivered as cash (and vouchers) as per the UK Government's commitment at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The UK also co-convenes the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream with the World Food Programme. The UK leads on digital cash delivery, and we have pioneered the delivery of mobile cash transfers in Uganda and use of biometric identification in Jordan.

The UK continues to look at how its aid money can be spent most effectively in our national interest including through the Integrated Review, which will report in the Autumn and inform the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's priorities.

■ Overseas Aid: Standards

Sarah Champion:

[\[84698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government remains committed to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's definition of Official Development Assistance.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: As the Foreign Secretary said to the House on 2 September, the UK is committed to spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on development assistance. It is both a manifesto commitment and is enshrined in law.

Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have been clear that development and poverty reduction will be at the heart of the new FCDO. The UK continues to rely on the Development Assistance Committee's definition and rules for what constitutes Official Development Assistance.

We are looking at how our aid budget can be used most effectively in our national interest through the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR).

■ Riot Control Weapons: USA

Emily Thornberry:

[\[84169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will place in the Library a copy of the evidence, analysis and conclusions reached by his Department as part of its June 2020 re-assessment of exports of riot control equipment to the US.

Wendy Morton:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: The matter of whether or not to issue an export licence requires an assessment of material which is often sensitive. It would not be appropriate to lay our assessments before Parliament. The Government upholds its parliamentary obligations around export licensing, and publishes information about all licences issued, refused, or revoked.

■ Shipping: British Nationals Abroad

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[90199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to ensure that UK offshore sailors visiting the EU will be able to (a) stay in the EU for 180 consecutive days a year and (b) receive equal treatment

to EU national visiting the UK for the same period of time; and what assessment he has made of the effect on offshore sailors of the differential arrangements that will potentially apply at the end of the transition period.

Wendy Morton:

The Government has discussed mobility arrangements across a number of areas as part of negotiations on our future relationship with the EU. The EU has already legislated such that UK nationals will not need a visa when travelling to the Schengen area for short stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This will apply from the end of the transition period to all UK nationals travelling to and within the Schengen area for purposes such as tourism. This is the standard length of stay that the EU provides to the nationals of eligible third countries that offer visa-free travel access for EU citizens, in line with existing EU legislation.

As things stand, stays beyond the EU's 90/180 day visa-free allocation from 1 January 2021 onwards will be for individual Member States to decide and implement through domestic entry rules and visa arrangements for non-EU citizens. UK nationals will need to discuss the specifics of their situation with the relevant Member State authorities and should be prepared to provide any extra documentation that may be required. Under the UK's new immigration system, EU citizens will be treated as non-visa nationals for the purposes of tourism after the end of the transition period. EU citizens will be able to come to the UK as visitors for six months without the need to obtain a visa. This length of stay is the standard visitor provision for the nationals of all other non-visa countries.

■ **Sudan: Floods**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[86609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the risk to (a) life, (b) health, (c) homes, (d) livelihoods, and (e) education following heavy flooding in Sudan in September 2020.

James Duddridge:

According to the UN, 110 lives have been lost and over 550,000 people have been affected in Sudan. Over 100,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged. Given the extent of this year's floods we would expect livelihoods and education to be interrupted in the worst affected areas.

FCDO is supporting the Government of Sudan-led flood response through UN and NGOs. This includes the UN Sudan Humanitarian Fund where the UK has provided £25 million in 2020 for a range of urgent needs including COVID-19, locusts and now flooding.

■ **Turkey: Natural Gas**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[89620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to support international sanctions against Turkey following its

militarily supported exploration for gas in waters recognised by UNCLOS as Greek territory; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

We do not currently believe that sanctions are the most effective instrument to resolve tensions between Turkey and Greece. Any EU listings decisions are a matter for EU member states. The UK will pursue an independent sanctions policy at the end of the Transition Period. We will look to carry over existing EU sanctions into domestic law wherever it helps to further the UK's foreign policy objectives. The transfer of each EU sanctions regime into UK law will be considered on a case by case basis, and designations transferred into UK autonomous sanctions regimes at the end of the Transition Period will be subject to a final ministerial decision-making process.

We believe it is critical for stability in the Mediterranean and for the integrity of the rules-based international system that disputes such as this are resolved, not through force, militarisation or coercion, but through dialogue and in accordance with international law. We will continue to work with the wider region to that end.

■ **World Food Programme: Coronavirus**

Mr John Baron:

[\[89618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the Government has donated to the World Food Programme in response to its request for assistance to respond to the covid-19 pandemic, to date.

James Duddridge:

The UK has committed £15 million to WFP through the UN's COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan to provide essential global humanitarian functions, such as passenger and cargo services, and medical evacuation. We also accelerated payment of a £12 million tranche of our core funding and worked through our country network to accelerate local payments, enabling WFP to rapidly respond to the global pandemic. The UK is one of the WFP's largest donors, providing £544 million in 2019, and as a force for good in the world we are deeply committed to WFP's essential work on famine and food security. I discussed the work of WFP with David Beasley (WFP Executive Director) when we met on 14 September.

■ **Yemen: Baha'i Faith**

Ruth Jones:

[\[89857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received reports of a court hearing in Sana'a, Yemen on 22 August 2020 in which six Baha'is who were pardoned and released from custody were declared fugitives; and if he will make a statement.

Ruth Jones:

[89858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what reports he has received on the situation of the Baha'i community in north Yemen; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

We welcome the long overdue release of six Baha'is from Houthi detention, but it is deeply concerning that they were detained for their beliefs in the first place and that they cannot live freely and peacefully in their country. We are monitoring the situation closely and we strongly condemn the continued persecution of the Baha'i in Yemen for their religious beliefs. We are working closely with our partners to raise these concerns directly with the Houthi authorities and urge the release of all Yemenis detained for their beliefs or nationality. We continue to follow the treatment of the Baha'is in Yemen closely, including through meeting their representatives in the UK and lobbying the relevant authorities. We continue to call on the parties to the conflict to respect the human rights of all Yemenis.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Asthma: Influenza

Emma Hardy:

[86743]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis was for the removal of certain categories of asthma sufferers from the list of people entitled to free flu vaccinations at their GP; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: There has been no change in the recommendation for those with asthma. The influenza chapter in 'Immunisation against infectious disease' (the "Green Book") says those with the following should receive the vaccine: "Asthma that requires continuous or repeated use of inhaled or systemic steroids or with previous exacerbations requiring hospital admission".

Further information is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19

Medical professionals are also encouraged to consider individual patient circumstances and use clinical judgement to take into account the risk of influenza exacerbating any underlying disease that any patient may have, as well as the risk of serious illness from influenza itself with vaccination offered in such cases.

■ Blood: Contamination

Richard Thomson:

[87705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to put in place a compensation framework for people who have received contaminated blood and for their families.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government remains committed to considering a framework for compensation, as well as actions to address disparities in financial and non-financial support for people infected and affected by contaminated blood across the United Kingdom.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus**Craig Tracey:**[\[82189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of 13 to 24 year olds with cancer who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable and advised to shield in England.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Digital has produced a count of living patients that are classified as being on the Shielded Patient List in England, aged 13-24 years old inclusive as at 27 August 2020, who fell within one or more cancer disease groups at that point in time. The total number falling within one of these categories as at 27 August 2020 was 4,858 patients.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Jim Shannon:**[\[84253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of working with private hospitals and private health providers to reduce the level of cancer patients unable to access care promptly.

Jo Churchill:

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work closely with the independent hospital sector (IS) through the ongoing national contract and through other local arrangements with other independent providers to deploy the IS facilities and workforce we need to deliver vital cancer services.

The effective use of IS capacity is key to recovery plans for diagnostics, such as endoscopy and imaging investigations, in particular for managing the expected surge in urgent referrals in the coming months.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[85051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for his oral contribution of 1 September 2020, Official Report, column 29, that the backlog of cancer cases built up during the covid-19 outbreak has been reduced by half.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: Those figures are drawn from management information that is shared weekly with the Department by NHS England. This shows that the backlog of patients waiting longer than 62 days from an urgent general practitioner referral for suspected cancer to first treatment increased by around 21,000 between the end of March and the end of May 2020. At the end of August, the

backlog stood around 8,000 higher than the end of March, a reduction of more than half in the backlog of cancer cases built up during the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ **Cancer: Redbridge**

Wes Streeting:

[84713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for cancer patients in the London Borough of Redbridge.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: Prior to COVID-19, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust had a recovery plan in place for its cancer performance. The impact of COVID-19 on cancer performance at the Trust has been significant and subsequently the Trust has developed a new Cancer Recovery Plan with a key focus on reducing waiting times.

The Trust has taken a range of actions to ensure improved performance. These include:

- moving a significant amount of its cancer activity to Spire Hartswood during the pandemic to ensure services have continued. It is now working on taking these back;
- increasing endoscopy capacity through re-opening capacity at Queen's Hospital; and
- utilising diagnostic capacity within the independent sector for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and computerized tomography (CT).

■ **Care Homes: General Practitioners**

Daniel Zeichner:

[85059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the testing of GPs who do not show symptoms of covid-19 and who regularly visit care homes.

Jo Churchill:

Essential workers (such as general practitioners) with symptoms of COVID-19 can access testing via the GOV.UK website. As set out in the 'Third phase of NHS response to COVID-19' letter if background infection risk increases in the autumn, and NHS Test and Trace secures 500,000+ tests per day, the Chief Medical Officer and the Department may decide in September or October to implement a policy of regular routine COVID-19 testing of all asymptomatic staff across the National Health Service.

Rachael Maskell:

[86106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how often named GPs should make a visit to their allocated care homes.

Jo Churchill:

On 1 May, National Health Service clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) were asked by NHS England and NHS Improvement to take immediate steps to implement consistent weekly care home 'check ins' to review patients identified as a clinical priority for assessment and care, drawing on general practice and community services staff. These checks should be carried out remotely wherever appropriate. The weekly check in should include appropriate and consistent medical oversight and input from a general practitioner (GP) and/ or geriatrician (with the frequency and form of that input determined by clinical judgement). CCGs were also asked to ensure all care homes have a named clinical lead.

The National Health Service (General Medical Services [GMS] Contracts) Regulations 2004 (as amended) includes a requirement for all patients to be assigned a named accountable GP who has overall responsibility for that patient's care. This does not necessarily mean that patients will see their named accountable GP for every appointment.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening**Robert Halfon:**[\[81805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the availability of cervical screening to people who show symptoms of cervical cancer.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 3 September 2020]: Women with symptoms of cervical cancer are urged to speak to their general practitioner (GP) as soon as possible. Cancer services continued during the COVID-19 crisis, although some appointments were rescheduled to protect vulnerable patients from having to attend hospitals. The recovery and restoration of screening and cancer services is well underway with detailed guidance issued by NHS England and NHS Improvement, including ensuring patients have clear information on how to access services and are confident about making appointments for current concerns.

NHS England is investing more than £258 million in initiatives to improve access to general practice as part of the delivery of the GP Five Year Forward View. More than half the country is now benefitting from improved access to all routine appointments (including cervical screening), at evening and weekends.

Craig Tracey:[\[82187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women aged under 25 have been invited for cervical screening in the last six months.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme provides all women between the ages of 25 and 64 the opportunity to be screened routinely to detect cervical abnormalities at an early stage, although women may receive their first invite up to six months before their 25th birthday.

Data on women screened under the age of 25 in the last six months is not currently available. The most recent available data for number of invites by age is for the 2018-19 financial year (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019). Data for the 2019-20 financial year will be published in the 2019-20 annual report, scheduled for publication in November 2020.

The latest available information can be found at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/cervical-screening-annual/england---2018-19>

Craig Tracey:

[82188]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women aged under 25 were invited for cervical screening in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme provides all women between the ages of 25 and 64 the opportunity to be screened routinely to detect cervical abnormalities at an early stage, although women may receive their first invite up to six months before their 25th birthday.

However, women outside of this age group may still be assessed by the programme. Under 25-year olds will be included in the screening record if cervical abnormalities are coincidentally found as part of separate gynaecological assessments.

The number of women invited by the programme is published on an annual basis, and includes breakdowns by age group. The report can be accessed at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/cervical-screening-annual>.

The data for under 25-year olds for the years requested is shown in the following table:

Number of women invited, by age-group, in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 (financial years):

AGE GROUP (YEARS)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Under 20	53	39	25
20-24	189,978	189,955	189,176
Total under 25	190,031	189,994	189,201

■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Olivia Blake: [\[86213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to allocate funding to deliver localised contact tracing for covid-19 to local authorities using central systems.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: Councils were allocated £300 million in new dedicated funding to support their dedicated Local Outbreak Plans, and will shortly publish further guidance on containing local outbreaks. Each upper tier local authority published the outbreak control management plans by end June 2020, focusing on prevention, identification and management of outbreaks, and working to break the chain of transmission.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Afzal Khan: [\[61585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of covid-19 patients who experienced symptoms for over (a) 1 month, (b) 2 months and (c) 3 months.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not available in the format requested.

Alec Shelbrooke: [\[81821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of air sanitisation and UV-C sterilisation units on reducing the spread of covid-19 in confined public spaces.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has made no assessment of the effectiveness of air sanitisation and ultraviolet C (UV-C) sterilisation units on reducing the spread of COVID-19 in confined public spaces.

PHE is liaising with national and international partners on the effectiveness of UV-C for inactivating SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19.

PHE will continue to review the emerging evidence.

Julian Sturdy: [\[81838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of amending the single adult household rule for covid-19 support bubbles for households with severely disabled children to allow grandparents to assist with childcare.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government recognises that the effect of long-term social distancing is likely to impact different groups in a variety of ways, including disabled people and their

families. These impacts have been carefully considered as part of the process for determining what measures to include in the Coronavirus Regulations and guidance, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We appreciate this is an ongoing concern which is why we are engaging with a wide range of charities and representative organisations.

Guidance on social distancing can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

This guidance outlines that it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing when providing care to a young child, or person with a disability or health condition. People should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing these types of care and take other precautions such as washing hands and opening windows for ventilation.

Julian Sturdy:

[81845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending support bubble arrangements to include all grandparents in addition to those who live in single adult households.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We recognise how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their friends and family throughout the past few months. Support bubbles are to assist the loneliest and most isolated in society. They were introduced to provide extra support to some of those most impacted by the difficult effects of the social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission low. The policy has been targeted at single-adult households.

People should socially distance from those not in their household or support bubble in order to keep people around them safe, limit the risk of the transmission of the virus and limit chains of transmission. We recognise that it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing when providing care to a young child or infant. People should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing childcare and take other precautions such as washing hands and clothes regularly.

Guidance on meeting people from outside of your household has been published and can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household>

Justin Madders:

[82048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 August 2020 to Question 71084, whether the independent panel on aerosol generating procedures has (a) been established, and (b) held a meeting.

Jo Churchill:

An Independent High-Risk Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) Panel has been set up to provide scientific advice to the Chief Medical Officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel will assess the evidence on AGPs, taking into account the potential route of transmission, and recommend the appropriate classification.

The panel has been meeting fortnightly since the end of July.

Chi Onwurah:[\[84232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 August 2020 to Question 43978, what steps his Department is taking to protect people from lower socio-economic groups from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

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

Rebecca Long Bailey:[\[86081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people in cold homes and in fuel poverty will be at higher risk from the worst effects covid-19 in winter 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

As the United Kingdom heads into its first winter with COVID-19, the impacts of the concurrent risks of COVID-19, cold weather and fuel poverty are not yet known. In light of the concurrent risk of COVID-19, Public Health England will be reviewing the Cold Weather Plan for England and related resources ahead of this winter.

Jim McMahon:[\[86732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's press release of 21 August 2020 entitled, More targeted action in local areas to curb the spread of coronavirus, when he plans to update his Department's COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers to include the requirement to consult with local MPs on restrictions.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The Contain Framework sets out how each local authority will respond and work to deliver their Local Outbreak Control Plans. The Framework and local plans will continue to evolve and reflect the changing scenario and learning. This includes currently undertaking a review of the sharing of information and consultation process for areas of concern including how local hon. Members are engaged and involved.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[84282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of potential therapeutics for the long term symptoms of covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In some patients, there may be additional long-term effects from COVID-19.

Because of this wide range of possible problems, the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation launched an 18-month research study in July that aims to understand the long term medical, psychological and rehabilitation needs of hospitalised patients.

This is expected to recruit 10,000 patients and aims to develop trials of new strategies for clinical care, including personalised treatments for groups of patients based on the disease characteristics they show as a result of having COVID-19 to improve their long-term health.

Information on this study can be found at the following link:

<https://www.leicesterbrc.nihr.ac.uk/themes/respiratory/research/phosp-covid/>

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Rachael Maskell:

[63426]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the scientific evidence is that underpins the decision that people with underlying respiratory conditions should be exempt from wearing a face mask.

Jo Churchill:

United Kingdom advice on face covering follows advice from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies. The Government is committed to following the evidence and will keep reviewing evidence from around the world and update our position as and when we need to.

Everyone must wear a face covering when they are in a shop or other place where the regulations apply, but we recognise reasonable adjustments are necessary for some people. We have included exemptions for those who may be unable to wear a face covering due to health, disability and other reasons.

Luke Pollard:

[82359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to provide face coverings free of charge to people who cannot afford to pay for them.

Jo Churchill:

Everyone can make their own face covering at home, using readily available textiles that can be washed, and reused after every use.

We have published guidance online which provides a step-by-step breakdown of how to make these face coverings at home and what materials can be used.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Chi Onwurah: [\[86036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 76698 on Coronavirus: Screening, whom that data sharing contact is; or whether he meant to refer in that Answer to a data sharing contract.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The response to Question 76698 should have read 'data sharing contract', as follows. We have arranged for the record to be corrected.

Public Health England (PHE) routinely shares confidential patient information with Directors of Public Health to manage local infectious disease outbreaks. The sharing of record-level positive test results data, including postcodes, with local authorities is being managed by PHE under a data sharing contract to ensure that the data protection risks associated with this large-scale sharing of personal data are being managed appropriately.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing

Nadia Whittome: [\[87716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling people to have close social contact with a limited number of people outside their household in addition to single person support bubbles during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: We recognise how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their friends and family throughout the past few months. Support bubbles are to assist the loneliest and most isolated in society. They were introduced to provide extra support to some of those most impacted by the difficult effects of the social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission low. The policy has been targeted at single-adult households for that reason.

■ Dental Services

Stuart Anderson: [\[52496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to vulnerable people that require urgent dental treatment but have no access to the internet.

Stuart Anderson: [\[52497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department has put in place to ensure that vulnerable people that do not have internet access are able to access urgent dental treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Internet access is not required to access dental care. Patients who need urgent dental treatment should contact their usual dental practice by phone or, if they do not have a regular practice and/or it is out of hours, can telephone NHS 111. Practices have been gradually restarting face to face care from 8 June. Patients needing urgent dental care will therefore either be offered care at their usual practice or telephone triaged to one of the over 600 urgent dental care centres NHS England set up during the peak of the pandemic and which remain open for urgent dental treatment.

■ Dental Services and Prescriptions: Mothers**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[87577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the period for new mothers to receive (a) free prescriptions and (b) dental care due to the restrictions places on health facilities during the covid-19 lockdown.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: The Government has made no such assessment and there are currently no plans to extend the period of maternity exemption certificates.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus**Judith Cummins:**[\[76757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog of hospital dental departments due to the postponement of face-to-face care during the covid-19 outbreak between March and 8 June 2020.

Jo Churchill:

With National Health Services (NHS) services under intense pressure as COVID-19 spread, we ensured that we had as many beds available as possible to care for patients with severe respiratory problems during the COVID-19 pandemic peak.

To enable this, every hospital in England suspended non-urgent elective operations to free up additional capacity needed to assist with the COVID-19 response. With the pandemic easing, NHS providers are now expected to recover the maximum elective activity possible between now and winter, making full use of available capacity both in the NHS and in contracted independent hospitals.

Elective care activity is now ramping up, and by October we expect the NHS to deliver:

1. The same number of outpatient attendances, follow ups, scans and endoscopy procedures as October last year; and
2. 90% of the overnight elective procedures and day cases carried out last October.

Face to face dental care has resumed across primary care and, as set out above, is expected to be quickly ramped up in hospital dental departments that provide the

equivalent of primary care dental treatment. Likewise, where inpatient care is needed for dental extractions requiring general anaesthesia (GA) services are expected to quickly recover the maximum elective capacity possible ahead of winter to help address any backlog.

■ Diabetes: Coronavirus

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[49568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of the deaths associated with covid-19 comprised people with diabetes in each of the last 12 weeks; for what reason people with diabetes have not been classed as extremely vulnerable; and whether he will make it his policy to include on the shielded list, people living with all types of diabetes .

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 2 June 2020]: The proportion of deaths associated with COVID-19 of people with diabetes in each of the last week 12 weeks is shown in the following table.

WEEK ENDING	ALL COVID-19 DEATHS	COVID-19 DEATHS WHERE THE PERSON HAD DIABETES	PERCENTAGE OF COVID-19 DEATHS WHERE THE PERSON HAD DIABETES
12 June 2020	945	275	29.1
19 June 2020	675	185	27.4
26 June 2020	585	165	28.2
3 July 2020	425	110	25.9
10 July 2020	335	85	25.4
17 July 2020	225	65	28.9
24 July 2020	190	65	34.2
31 July 2020	160	50	31.3
7 August 2020	130	45	34.6
14 August 2020	135	45	33.3
21 August 2020	90	30	33.3
28 August 2020	55	20	36.4

The guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 has been developed by expert doctors identifying specific

medical conditions based on what we know about the virus so far. The clinical evidence does not currently support classing people with diabetes as extremely vulnerable. We will continue to keep this evidence under review.

■ Eating Disorders: Computer Software

Munira Wilson:

[\[86763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what safeguarding measures his Department has put in place to ensure that the NHS Better Health app is not used by people with eating disorders.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The NHS Weight Loss Plan app asks users to enter their height and weight to calculate their body mass index (BMI). If a user is underweight or a healthy weight according to their BMI, messaging is shown that explains this weight loss tool is not for them. App users who are underweight or at the lower end of a healthy weight are not prompted to use the app any further than the BMI calculation stage. The app also advises users to discuss their weight with their general practitioner if they have any concerns.

■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[85049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of GPs allowing more face-to-face appointments following the outbreak of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: On 1 August the Government changed the National Health Service incident level from Level 4 (national) to Level 3 (regional) due to the COVID-19 demand on the NHS, after the Chief Medical Officers and the Government's Joint Biosecurity Centre downgraded the United Kingdom's overall COVID-19 alert level in June. As a result, NHS England and NHS Improvement issued guidance on 31 August stating that general practitioner (GP) practices must offer face-to-face appointments at surgeries and continue to use remote triage, video, online and telephone consultations where appropriate – whilst also considering those unable to access or engage with digital services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently carrying out an evaluation of online and video consultations in general practice to understand their impact. This evaluation and other research work into the significant innovations in how GP practices offer care is an opportunity for the Government, NHS England and NHS Improvement and professional representatives to ensure innovations can be adapted into a sustainable model into the future, to better meets patient needs and provide the best quality of care and ease of access for patients.

Dan Jarvis:

[85050]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of (a) remote and (b) telephone GP appointments on patient well-being.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently carrying out an evaluation of online and video consultations in general practice to understand their impact. They are also working collaboratively with patients and a number of research organisations who are conducting studies on digital access. This work will improve NHS England and NHS Improvement's view of patient impact and experience, which will be used in work with suppliers to improve the design and accessibility of digital systems to better meet patient needs.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[87482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that GPs have the (a) staffing and (b) financial support they need to manage the long term effects of the covid-19 outbreak, particularly in the winter months.

Jo Churchill:

Qualified general practitioners (GPs) who had temporarily, or permanently, left NHS service were asked to return to support the COVID-19 response as part of a "call to arms" for healthcare professionals across the National Health Service. GP practices continue to play a vital role in our response to COVID-19 and we remain committed to growing the workforce and expanding the number of appointments available to patients.

On 5 July, NHS England and NHS Improvement announced a new 'Your COVID Recovery' service as part of wider NHS plans to expand access to COVID-19 rehabilitation treatments for those who have survived the virus but still have problems with breathing, mental health problems or other complications. A major UK research study into the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on hospitalised patients has also been launched. The PHOSP-COVID study has been awarded £8.4 million jointly by UK Research and Innovation and the National Institute for Health Research.

■ Health Professions: Protective Clothing

Geraint Davies:

[85926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on guidance on the wearing of personal protective equipment by health professionals when they are working in (a) early years and (b) educational settings supporting children and young people.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: Our priority is to get pupils and students back to schools and colleges safely.

At each stage of our response to the pandemic, we have listened to and continue to be guided by the latest medical and scientific advice. Children in early years settings do not need to wear a face covering. However, if we think that the guidance should apply to staff and visitors in early years settings then we will not hesitate to act swiftly and decisively.

Nationwide, schools and further education settings will have the discretion to require staff, visitors and pupils to wear face coverings in indoor communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed, if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.

■ **Health: Disadvantaged**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[81880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on producing impact assessments on health inequalities in policy development.

Jo Churchill:

We are determined to address the long-standing inequalities that exist and level up across society, which requires a whole of Government approach. The Department works closely with other Government departments to raise awareness of health inequalities and departments in turn are responsible for carrying out equalities impact assessments under the Public Sector Equality Duty for all key Government policy and legislation. Recent examples of this include impact assessments for the Coronavirus Act 2020 and COVID-19 policies which considered, where relevant, the potential impact on ethnic minorities and factors such as deprivation and intergenerational housing.

■ **Healthy Start Scheme: Milk**

Emma Hardy:

[\[86145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to include dairy-free milks for children with dairy allergies in the healthy start voucher scheme.

Jo Churchill:

Healthy Start vouchers can be exchanged for fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, plain cow's milk and infant formula. These products are set out in legislation. The Healthy Start Scheme and Welfare Food (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/267) expand this from 1 October 2020 to include pulses and canned fruit and vegetables, but not those to which fat, salt, sugar or flavouring have been added.

The Healthy Start scheme is kept under continuous review to ensure the products set out in legislation meet the aims of the scheme and the needs of families who use it.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[82036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of how patient (a) acquisition and (b) outcome of covid-19 infection within a hospital setting differs by (i) occupation, (ii) clinical setting, (iii) ethnicity and (iv) social deprivation.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England's (PHE) rapid review 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19' was published on 2 June 2020 and presented findings based on surveillance data available to PHE and through linkage to broader health data sets.

For this review, PHE matched thousands of laboratory records of COVID-19 cases to other health records to draw down accurate data on ethnicity, age, sex, deprivation, and region. They do not take into account the existence of comorbidities, which are strongly associated with the risk of death from COVID-19 and are likely to explain some of the differences.

■ Hospitals: Infectious Diseases

Gareth Davies:

[\[82598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the prevalence is of healthcare associated infections in hospitals in England.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England publishes data on hospital-onset bloodstream infection as incidence rates. However, prevalence data are not available.

■ Influenza: Health and Social Services

Helen Hayes:

[\[87609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has put in place to encourage the uptake of influenza vaccinations among the health and adult social care workforce in advance of the winter flu season; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement, and Public Health England (PHE) are working with, professional bodies and royal colleges, regulators, trade unions and key social care organisations to support staff to access the flu vaccination.

PHE is running a communications campaign for health and social care workers and providing materials to support local campaigns promoting the flu vaccination to health and social care workers. The campaign promotes the protective benefit of the flu vaccination for themselves, their family and the people they care for. In addition, the Department will be publishing new guidance to encourage social care workers to have the flu vaccine.

The Department has procured additional flu vaccine doses, which will support likely increased demand across the country, including from health and social care staff.

■ **Influenza: Social Services**

Helen Hayes:

[87607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what preparations his Department have made to procure adequate quantities of influenza vaccinations to prepare the adult social care workforce adequately in advance of the winter flu season; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Hayes:

[87608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has put in place to ensure that influenza vaccinations are adequately distributed to the adult social care workforce in advance of the winter flu season.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 September 2020]: Responsibility for offering flu vaccination to social care workers rests with their employers as part of their occupational health responsibility to help protect both staff and those that they care for. All frontline social care workers are also eligible for free flu vaccinations through their general practitioner (GP) or local pharmacy. NHS England and NHS Improvement provided this complementary scheme to improve access for social care workers, and the scheme will continue in 2020/21.

GPs and pharmacies are responsible for ordering stock directly from manufacturers. However, as part of our planning for this winter, the Department has procured additional vaccine so that there is sufficient vaccine for all frontline social care workers to have the flu vaccine. The Department will shortly be publishing guidance on how providers can access the additional vaccine.

■ **Influenza: Vaccination**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[81732]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans in place to ensure that care home residents can be vaccinated against the flu in a timely manner.

Jo Churchill:

Care homes should make provision, in collaboration with colleagues in primary care, to provide flu vaccination sessions for residents in a timely manner.

Primary care providers are being incentivised to work together across primary care network footprints to pool resources and collaborate to vaccinate more people. This includes the provision into care homes for both residents and staff.

Munira Wilson:

[82470]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of how many and what proportion of (a) people at risk and (b) health and care workers will receive a flu vaccination for the winter period 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase uptake take for people in at risk groups to at least 75% in 2020/21, and for all healthcare workers to be offered the flu vaccine this winter.

Jim Shannon:

[83813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to maximise the take-up of the influenza vaccine in 2020.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with local areas to ensure that regional teams have plans in place to increase coverage of the flu vaccination this winter. In addition to developing the existing system of providing vaccinations through general practice, community pharmacies, schools, community and other National Health Service settings to reach new cohorts and increase uptake in existing cohorts; new models of delivery have been shared with regional commissioning teams to encourage innovative thinking such as mobile and mass vaccination models to allow for increases in uptake safely whilst observing social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements.

Rachael Maskell:

[83874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the winter flu vaccination will be ready for (a) elderly and vulnerable people who qualify for their vaccination and (b) all people aged over 50 (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

Jo Churchill:

General practitioners and pharmacists are directly responsible for ordering flu vaccine from suppliers which are used to deliver the national flu programme to adults. Flu vaccination deliveries for those who are in at risk groups will start to be available in September and will continue in all areas in England throughout the winter months.

We aim to further extend the flu vaccine programme in November and December to include the 50-64 year old age group. This extension is being phased so we can prioritise those in at risk groups first.

Derek Twigg:

[84148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 77523 on Influenza: vaccination, how much additional stock has been ordered; and who have the orders been placed with.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: The Department has agreed to procure 7.65 million additional doses of seasonal flu vaccine to date, and continues to work with

suppliers to increase the size of this additional stock. This is in addition to the stock that general practitioners and pharmacists have ordered directly from manufacturers.

The contracts for the additional vaccine are with Aventis Pharma Limited (T/A Sanofi), Mylan UK Healthcare Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline UK Ltd and Seqirus UK Ltd.

Derek Twigg:

[84150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from what date he estimates flu vaccines will be administered to patients in winter 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 September 2020]: General practitioners are responsible for arranging flu vaccination clinics for those who are eligible for flu vaccination. Flu vaccination starts in September and continues throughout the winter months. The flu vaccine is also available to adults who are in at risk groups from local pharmacists throughout the winter months.

■ **Luxe Lifestyle: Protective Clothing**

Owen Thompson:

[68731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of Luxe Lifestyle Ltd's capacity to fulfil its contract FFP2/KN95 to provide 1.2 million gowns and 10 million masks to the NHS during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2020]: Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

The supplier will be evaluated by Departmental officials on their financial standing, compliance with minimum product specifications and ability to perform the contract. Contracts are awarded by the appropriate Departmental accounting officer in line with Departmental terms and conditions.

■ **Maternity Services: Coronavirus**

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[88337]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he has issued to NHS Trusts on allowing partners of pregnant women to attend (a) appointments with midwives, (b) routine scan appointments, (c) non-routine scan appointments and (d) during labour.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service is making arrangements to ensure that women are supported and cared for safely through pregnancy, birth and the period afterwards during this pandemic.

Decisions on partners attending scans and appointments is subject to local discretion by trusts and other NHS bodies.

A new Framework to assist NHS trusts to reintroduce access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women in English maternity services was published on 8 September at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/09/par001599-framework-for-the-reintroduction-of-visitors-throughout-maternity-services-sep-2020.pdf>

We expect trusts to use this Framework and consider as a priority how access for partners, visitors and other supporters of pregnant women can be reintroduced whilst maintaining the safety of all service users, staff and visitors.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[85971]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 27 April 2020 from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North on covid-19 shielding for parents of vulnerable children.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: The Department replied to the hon. Member's letter on 10 September 2020.

■ **Mental Health Services: Coronavirus**

Tracy Brabin:

[86129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mental health support is available to freelancers in the digital, culture, media and sport sectors who have not received an income for over four months as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who are not eligible for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 10 September 2020]: We are committed to supporting everyone's mental wellbeing, during this unprecedented period. National Health Service mental health services have remained open for business throughout this time providing ongoing support, including for people who work freelance if they have a clinical need. For those with severe needs or in crisis, all NHS mental health providers have established 24 hours a day, seven days a week mental health crisis lines. We have also published official guidance on mental health and wellbeing on GOV.UK and the Every Mind Matters campaign and website contains tailored, practical steps that the public can take to support their wellbeing and manage their mental health during the pandemic.

The Government has provided additional funding of £9.2 million for mental health charities to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing during this time.

We are also working with the NHS, Public Health England and other key partners to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts and plan for how to support mental health and wellbeing throughout the coming weeks and months.

■ MMR Vaccine: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[86109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the take up of MMR vaccinations in (a) York and (b) the UK.

Jo Churchill:

A Public Health England (PHE) evaluation of the early impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures on the routine childhood vaccinations in England shows that measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination counts fell from February 2020, and in the three weeks after introduction of social distancing measures were 19.8% lower (95% CI -20.7 to -18.9%) than the same period in 2019, before improving in mid-April. PHE is working closely with partners on a recovery plan to catch up any children who missed out on MMR and continues to monitor and assess the situation closely. The full evaluation is published at the following link:

<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.19.2000848>

Data is not available for York, but data regarding the MMR vaccine uptake throughout the United Kingdom and England is available at upper tier local authority level and experimental quarterly vaccination coverage at general practice level. The latest data for January to March 2020 can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-cover-programme-2019-to-2020-quarterly-data>

■ NHS: Drugs

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[86009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS is only paying a reasonable price for drugs.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is the independent body responsible for developing evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent an effective use of resources based on their clinical and cost-effectiveness.

The costs of branded medicines are controlled by the 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access and the statutory scheme for branded medicines.

■ Obesity**Stuart Anderson:****[82392]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department plans to allocate to the NHS to deliver the Government's new obesity strategy, announced on 27 July 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Through the obesity strategy we are committed to expanding weight management services and will provide further details on this later in the year.

We are already backing all National Health Service organisations with significant funding commitments including the Chancellor's latest fund for the healthcare response to COVID-19, which stands at £31.9 billion for this year alone. This is in addition to the Long Term Settlement that will see NHS funding increase by £33.9 billion by 2023-24.

Alex Norris:**[84729]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people with severe and complex obesity by local authority in each of the last five years.

Alex Norris:**[84730]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of people with severe and complex obesity who used (a) Tier 3 weight management services and (b) Tier 4 weight management services by local authority in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 September 2020]: NHS Digital holds data on severe obesity in children in Reception and Year 6 by local authority for school years 2017-18 and 2018-19 through the National Child Measurement Programme. This information is attached. The programme did not collect data on severe obesity prior to 2017-18.

The latest report from the National Child Measurement Programme can be viewed at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2018-19-school-year>

NHS Digital has advised that it does not hold any further information on the number of people with severe and complex obesity by local authority or information on the number of people who used Tier 3 or Tier 4 weight management services by local authority.

■ Obesity: Eating Disorders

Nadia Whittome: [85131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the obesity strategy on people with eating disorders.

Hilary Benn: [85942]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of calorie labelling on the incidence of eating disorders.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: We recognise concerns people with eating disorders may have on measures to reduce obesity and are committed to striking a careful balance between enabling people to make healthier food and drink choices whilst not negatively impacting on those with or recovering from an eating disorder.

Obesity represents a huge cost to the health and wellbeing of the individual, the National Health Service and the wider economy. With over six in 10 adults and more than one in three children aged 10 to 11 years old overweight or obese, it is right we take action.

In response to feedback to our consultation on out-of-home calorie labelling, we will introduce legislation to require large out-of-home sector businesses, that is businesses with 250 or more employees, to calorie label the food they sell.

An equalities assessment and impact assessment were published alongside the consultation response and can be viewed at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/calorie-labelling-for-food-and-drink-served-outside-of-the-home

■ Obesity: Poverty

Nadia Whittome: [85132]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the policy paper entitled Tackling obesity: government strategy published on 27 July 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the potential link between poverty and obesity.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: Data from the National Child Measurement Programme shows obesity prevalence is highest amongst the most deprived groups in society. Children in the most deprived parts of the country are more than twice as likely to be obese as their peers living in the richest areas.

■ Pancreatic Cancer

Matt Vickers: [83975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of the symptoms of pancreatic cancer.

Jo Churchill:

In 2017, Public Health England (PHE) ran a Be Clear on Cancer pilot campaign in the East and West Midlands which focussed on a range of abdominal symptoms, such as diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort that can be indicative of several cancers, including pancreatic cancer. Further information on the pilot is available at the following link:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/16-be-clear-on-cancer/Abdominal%20Symptoms%20Regional%20Pilot>

■ Pancreatic Cancer: Health Services**Matt Vickers:****[83976]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients with pancreatic cancer receive treatment as quickly as possible.

Jo Churchill:

Increasing the number of cancers that are diagnosed earlier is a top priority for the National Health Service. The NHS Long Term Plan sets an ambition to diagnose 75% of cancers at stage 1 or 2 by 2028, up from the current rate of just over 50%. To achieve this ambition, we will need to improve the stage of diagnosis for all cancers, including pancreatic cancer.

To deliver on this ambition, NHS England and NHS Improvement are setting up Rapid Diagnostic Centres (RDCs) which bring together diagnostic equipment and expertise to streamline diagnostic services for cancer. RDCs are focusing on cancers that generate non-specific symptoms and are harder to diagnose, such as pancreatic cancer.

■ Phenelzine**Mick Whitley:****[86756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Department is taking to (a) monitor the recent shortages of Nardil (Phenelzine) and (b) ensure that patients who require the drug have access to it.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The Department is aware of an ongoing supply issue affecting licensed phenelzine 15mg tablets (Nardil) due to manufacturing issues. Although the supply of licensed phenelzine is affected, unlicensed phenelzine 15mg tablets imported from abroad by specialist importer companies in addition to phenelzine 15mg capsules specials are available.

We understand the importance of careful management of any changes to a patient's phenelzine treatment and have worked closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement and national experts and have issued comprehensive guidance to the NHS to support those impacted during this time. The guidance issued includes information on how supplies of alternative phenelzine 15mg products can be accessed, where clinicians have deemed it appropriate.

We are continuing to work closely with the affected supplier to resolve the issue as quickly as possible and specialist importer companies to maintain access to supplies of phenelzine products.

■ **Phenylketonuria: Sapropterin**

Peter Gibson:

[\[86169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions his Department has had with NICE on the appraisal of Kuvan as a treatment for phenylketonuria.

Jo Churchill:

Departmental Ministers and officials regularly discuss a range of matters with colleagues in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, including the availability of medicines for the treatment of a number of conditions.

■ **Plastic Surgery**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[85955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to collect data on the (a) number and (b) type of non-surgical aesthetic treatments that are being carried out.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[86557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS hospitals are collecting data on restorative services that they are required to provide when adverse effects of aesthetic treatments require medical intervention and correction.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 11 September 2020]: The Government is committed to improving the safety of cosmetic procedures through better training for practitioners and clear information so that people can make informed decisions about their care.

Neither the Department nor its arm's length bodies hold or collect data on non-surgical aesthetic treatments. Officials continue to work with stakeholders to explore the options for enhanced data collection and reporting mechanisms in this area. This could include the prevalence of cosmetic procedures, adverse reactions to procedures, and the incidence of consumers seeking treatment through NHS services for health complications following private cosmetic procedures.

■ **Plastic Surgery: Regulation**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[85952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to empower local authorities to (a) refuse registration of people wishing to practise aesthetic procedures and (b) set conditions on the qualification standards for people practising aesthetic procedures on patients.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[85953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to introduce extended powers for local authorities and their associated enforcement agencies to regulate the aesthetics sector.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[85954]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to introduce legislation to implement a mandatory licensing scheme for people wishing to practise aesthetic procedures in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Local Government Miscellaneous Act 1982 gives local authorities powers to regulate the hygiene and cleanliness of the practice of businesses providing a specific range of body modification procedures, including electrolysis, semi-permanent skin-colouring and body piercing. Local authorities also have general enforcement powers under health and safety at work legislation if they judge that there is a risk to customers' health and safety.

The Department is exploring the regulation of premises, practitioners, products and consumer safeguards for cosmetic procedures. This includes an assessment of the regulation of practitioners and businesses offering the most invasive procedures, additional safeguards for children, and effective enforcement mechanisms.

■ **Protective Clothing: Procurement**

Dawn Butler:

[81619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the sign-off process for awarding contracts for personal protective equipment procurement.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance on how contracting authorities should respond to COVID-19 was published on 18 March at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances, which includes supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. These include a direct contract award due to extreme urgency or the absence of competition.

■ **Radiotherapy: Medical Equipment**

Tim Farron:

[84994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to allocate funding for the replacement of radiotherapy machines in use in NHS trusts that are past the recommended 10-year lifespan in 2021-22; and if he will make a statement.

Tim Farron:

[\[84995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding he plans to allocate to replacement of linear accelerator radiotherapy machines in use by NHS trusts that are past the recommended 10-year lifespan; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 9 September 2020]: Future National Health Service capital funding will be determined as part of the Department's multi-year settlement at the next Spending Review.

■ **Radox Laboratories: Coronavirus**

Nick Smith:

[\[81767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's new story of 7 August 2020, Update on Radox test kits, which elements of Radox covid-19 tests did not meet required safety standards; and through what processes that determination was made.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) reviewed the regulatory documents relating to Radox home sampling kits and revealed that documents for the swabs did not meet the regulatory requirements to support CE marking of the swab within the kit.

On 15 July the decision was made by the Department to pause the use of Radox kits pending further investigation.

Following confirmation from the Department that despite instruction to quarantine these kits, there were still cases of the kits being used. On 6 August 2020, the MHRA contacted Radox and asked them to conduct without delay a recall of those affected sampling kits which had been distributed to the United Kingdom in order to ensure that the kits are not used.

Radox communicated this action by means of a Field Safety Notice. The Department as a customer/recipient of the Field Safety Notice instructed their users to take the actions detailed in the Field Safety Notice.

Radox issued the Field Safety Notice on 7 August 2020.

■ **Skin Cancer: Health Education**

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[81516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference Melanoma UK's report entitled, State of the Nation: Non Melanoma Skin Cancer, published in March 2020, if he will make it his Department's policy to highlight the importance of wearing (a) sunscreen and (b) a hat when outside in the sun to help prevent skin cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) is supportive of Melanoma UK's initiative to increase awareness of non-melanoma skin cancer.

PHE supports the guidance on sun protection provided on the NHS website at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/>

This guidance supports the wearing of hats and mentions the use of sunscreen. However, it states that sunscreen should not be relied upon alone to provide protection.

The ultraviolet (UV) Index provides an indication of the likelihood that the UV from the sun will cause sunburn. The BBC and the Met Office provide UV Index forecasts and advises that people check the UV Index forecasts. PHE reports near-live data from its monitoring sites across the UK at the following link:

<https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/uv-index-graphs>

Further advice on sun safety is included in the Heatwave Plan for England, available to view at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888668/Heatwave_plan_for_England_2020.pdf

PHE also provides advice to other Government departments, such as the Health and Safety Executive, on sun safety to help develop their policies.

■ Vaccination: Children**Catherine West:****[84314]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 August 2020 to Question 66150, what the timescale is for ensuring that all children receive vaccinations for missed immunisation during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with regional commissioners to ensure routine childhood immunisations continue to be delivered in primary care settings.

Programmes delivered through schools have been rescheduled as schools re-open. School-age vaccination programmes are delivered at different times by different providers throughout the academic year, and so local variation will be seen in restoration. Some of the outstanding vaccinations have already been delivered before the beginning of this academic year (2020/21), and the remainder are expected to be completed by the end of the academic year.

The Government's COVID-19 Action Plan has stated that everyone should ensure that they and their family's vaccinations are up-to-date. Further information is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk>

Catherine West:

[84315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 August 2020 to Question 66150 on vaccination: children, what assessment his Department has made of the particular needs of vulnerable children.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) monitors vaccine trends and coverage levels and acts jointly with the NHS England and NHS Improvement to increase uptake when it is required for public health reasons. Vaccination uptake data can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vaccine-uptake#cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-programme>

■ Visual Impairment: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[84250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who have experienced sight loss as a result of covid-19 receive adequate treatment.

Jo Churchill:

We are not aware of any scientific evidence linking COVID-19 with sight loss and it is not one of the symptoms or complications recognised by Public Health England.

On 31 July, further guidance was issued to local National Health Service providers and commissioners on outlining the next phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 and concurrent non-COVID-19 activity, including optical services. The guidance can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/07/Phase-3-letter-July-31-2020.pdf>

■ Vitamin D

Sir Graham Brady:

[84965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has undertaken of the validity of evidence linking time spent out of doors with improving vitamin D levels.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England monitors the diet and nutritional status of the United Kingdom's population through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) rolling programme.

Data from the NDNS show that mean blood vitamin D concentrations were lowest in the winter months (January-March) and highest in the summer months (July-September). These data can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ndns-time-trend-and-income-analyses-for-years-1-to-9>

■ Vitamin D: Coronavirus

Sir Graham Brady:

[84963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of evidence suggesting a potential link between vitamin D deficiency and susceptibility to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) commissioned the Scientific Advisory Commission on Nutrition (SACN) to examine new evidence on whether vitamin D supplementation could reduce the risk of Acute Respiratory Tract Infections (ARTIs). The SACN's rapid review concluded that evidence currently does not support vitamin D supplementation to prevent ARTIs in the general United Kingdom population. The review reiterates the importance of vitamin D for bone and muscle health. The SACN will keep this topic under review and consider updating this assessment if emerging high-quality evidence suggests a change to existing conclusions. The review can be accessed at the following link:

<https://app.box.com/s/q0ldpth1upfd7fw763ew3aqa3c0pyvky>

PHE supported the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to review emerging evidence on vitamin D and the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. NICE's review concluded that there is currently no robust evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements to reduce the risk or severity of COVID-19. The review can be accessed at the following link:

www.nice.org.uk/advice/es28/evidence/evidence-review-pdf-8777674477

Sir Graham Brady:

[84964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage the maintenance of adequate vitamin D levels to support immune response during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England re-issued its advice on vitamin D supplementation in early April 2020, in response to the stay at home measures because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It recommended that everyone should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 micrograms to mitigate the effects of reduced time outdoors. This advice was published on NHS.UK and related to protecting muscle and bone health. The advice is not about preventing COVID-19 or mitigating its effects. This guidance can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

■ Working Hours

Julian Sturdy:

[82679]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) key workers and (b) their employers of those workers having to reduce their hours to care for children in place of grandparents as a result of covid-19 restrictions on household contact.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government recognises the crucial role played by key workers and the huge efforts they have been making to balance their work and childcare responsibilities during this difficult period. We acknowledge that for some keyworkers, COVID-19 restrictions will create challenges for managing these responsibilities. We equally appreciate the challenges faced by the employers of key workers, who have ensured that our critical services have kept running.

People should socially distance from those not in their household or support bubble in order to keep people around them safe, limit the risk of the transmission of the virus and limit chains of transmission. We recognise that it may not always be possible or practicable to maintain social distancing when providing care to a young child or infant. People should still limit close contact as much as possible when providing childcare and take other precautions such as washing hands and clothes regularly.

We do not record this data directly, but the Office for National Statistics provides information on employment rates and hours worked comparing men and women with and without dependent children. The 2019 release is available at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2019>

HOME OFFICE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Ian Paisley:

[906289]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood.

James Brokenshire:

Work in relation to the Muslim Brotherhood is a matter for the Home Office, so we are responding on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

There has not been formal inter-Ministerial engagement on the Muslim Brotherhood. The Government keeps under review the activities of those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament.

■ Asylum

Sir John Hayes:

[88823]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) people and (b) dependents of people who have had an application for asylum rejected are (i) housed and (ii) receive payments under Section 95 and Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Chris Philp:

Figures outlining the number of people supported are published as part of the Home Office transparency data <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support>

These figures are not broken down into those that have had their asylum claim rejected or the number of people in each household. This information is not readily accessible and would require a manual search.

Sir John Hayes:

[88824]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the annual cost to the public purse is for (a) housing of and (b) weekly payments to people who have had their asylum application rejected and their dependents under Section 95 and Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, in the most recent period for which data is available.

Chris Philp:

Data is published on a quarterly basis with the latest information covering until 31st June 2020. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in November 2020

Accommodation costs are considered to be commercially confidential so we do not provide this information, however, total asylum spends are published as part of transparency data <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

These figures are not broken down into those that have had their asylum claim rejected. This information is not readily accessible and would require a manual search.

■ Asylum: Employment

Gill Furniss:

[91119]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government's review on the restrictions on asylum seekers' rights to work, initiated in December 2018, will be concluded.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue and is under review; it is crucial we take the time to get this right. We are listening carefully to the arguments and considering the evidence put forward on the issue.

The findings of the review will be communicated once this work is completed.

■ British Nationality: EU Nationals

Daisy Cooper:

[\[90274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of applications for British citizenship from EU citizens with Settled Status, but who did not hold Comprehensive Sickness Insurance during a period when they were students or deemed self-sufficient, have been successful.

Kevin Foster:

I am unaware of any application for British Citizenship which has been refused purely on the basis of this aspect of the EEA Regulations relating to free movement.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Justin Madders:

[\[86090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many physical visits were carried out to monitor adherence to quarantine rules by arrivals into the UK in (a) July and (b) August 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) data relating to the Covid-19 enforcement notices issued in England under the International Travel Regulations is provided monthly by National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) to the Home Office. The data provides an analysis of the rationale for issuing a FPN and a breakdown of issuance by Police Force. The physical visits carried out is an operational matter for the police and data on these is not held by the Home Office'

■ Independent Review of Prevent

Naz Shah:

[\[90157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the organisations being consulted on the terms of reference for the Independent Review of Prevent.

Naz Shah:

[\[90158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps civil society organisations can take to contribute to the development of the terms of reference for the Independent Review of Prevent.

Naz Shah:

[\[90159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Independent Reviewer of Prevent will be appointed.

Naz Shah:

[\[90160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeframe is for the independent review of the Prevent strategy; and when that review is planned to be completed.

Naz Shah:

[90161]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people (a) applied, (b) were shortlisted and (c) were interviewed for the position of the Independent Reviewer of Prevent.

James Brokenshire:

We welcome the views of any civil society organisation which wants to contribute to the development of the new Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Prevent. They can contribute by contacting the team which will support the new Independent Reviewer at indpreventreview@homeoffice.gov.uk.

The Review team has approached some of the organisations with which they had been in contact during earlier stages of the Review to invite their comments and which represent a broad range of views on Prevent, including those critical of the current approach. But the views of all organisations are welcome.

Any views provided to the Review Team will be shared with the Independent Reviewer once appointed and before the Terms of Reference are agreed.

Interviews for the role of Independent Reviewer are taking place later this month, following which there will be an announcement in due course. There were 35 applicants for the role; we cannot comment further on an ongoing recruitment process.

The aim is for the Independent Review to be completed by August 2021.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[90061]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to reply to the letter from the hon Member for East Londonderry dated 8 June 2020 regarding British National (Overseas) passport holders.

Kevin Foster:

A reply was sent by the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration on 16 September 2020.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Crime**

Andrew Griffith:

[91205]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences there have been of non-compliance with section 59 of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 in (a) Sussex and (b) England.

Andrew Griffith:

[91207]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences there have been for non-compliance with section 43 of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 in (a) Sussex and (b) England.

Andrew Griffith:

[91208]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offences have been committed of non-compliance with section 42 of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 in (a) Sussex and (b) England.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested.

The offences covered by sections 42, 43 and 59 of the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 are not notifiable offences and therefore do not require the police to inform the Home Office for statistical purposes.

■ **Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation**

Louise Haigh:

[91089]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether funding will be made available to continue the work of Warrington Peace Foundation's victims of terrorism support service.

Victoria Atkins:

Earlier this year, the Home Office ran a grant competition to award up to £500,000 for support services for victims of terrorism. The Warrington Peace Foundation, along with other organisations, was able to bid into that competition.

Given that this is an ongoing commercial process, we are unable to advise on the outcome of the competition at this time. Any award announcement will be published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>.

■ **Travellers: Caravan Sites**

Sarah Olney:

[91121]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department will publish its response to the consultation on Strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments, which closed on 4 March 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

I refer my Hon Friend to the answer I gave to UIN 62648 on 02 July 2020 to the Hon Member for Sevenoaks.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Buildings: Insulation**

Mike Amesbury:

[91141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much has been allocated from the £200 million fund for the removal of ACM cladding to date.

Christopher Pincher:

Current data on the allocation of ACM remediation funding is included in the monthly Building Safety Data Release, which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/aluminium-composite-material-cladding#acm-remediation-data>.

Housing: Construction

Tim Farron: [90991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the proposed National Infrastructure Levy for increasing the delivery of on-site (a) social and (b) affordable housing.

Tim Farron: [90992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the proposed National Infrastructure Levy on the flexibility of affordable housing policies in high-value areas.

Tim Farron: [90993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of potential effect of the proposed National Infrastructure Levy on local authorities' prioritisation of the delivery of social and affordable housing.

Christopher Pincher:

We intend to reform the current approach to developer contributions by creating a new, single system, the Infrastructure Levy. This new Levy would be a flat rate, value based charge, set nationally, at either a single rate, or at area specific rates, and charged on the final value of a development. The new Levy would be able to fund both affordable housing and supporting infrastructure. We will aim for the new Levy to raise more revenue than under the current system of developer contributions, and deliver at least as much – if not more – on-site affordable housing as at present. Our proposals are set out in our White Paper 'Planning for the Future' which was published on 6 August and is out to consultation until 29th October. The consultation responses will support the assessment of the proposals, and detailed design.

Tim Farron: [90995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish modelling undertaken by his Department on the potential effect of the proposed expansion of the Small Sites Exemption Policy on (a) the number of sites likely to be exempted and (b) the delivery of social and affordable housing.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is currently consulting on this matter. Details of the impact are set out in the consultation document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>.

■ **Housing: Insulation**

Marsha De Cordova:

[89848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support homeowners who cannot sell their homes due to the freeholder of their building not providing them with an EWS1 certificate.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government recognises the difficulties that some homeowners are facing in being able to provide mortgage lenders with a completed EWS1, as well as capacity challenges affecting building owners commissioning the form. The Department is encouraging mortgage lenders to accept other equivalent evidence from building owners for valuation purposes and is working with professional bodies to increase the number of skilled professionals that can complete EWS1 forms.

■ **Land: Sales**

Tim Farron:

[90994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to analyse the extent of the use of options agreements in the English land market in order to understand how a shift to a zonal planning system will increase the amounts of land being made available to small and medium sized developers.

Christopher Pincher:

My Department is currently consulting on options for increasing the transparency of contractual controls, including options agreements, used to exercise control over land. The consultation can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907213/Call for evidence on Contractual Controls.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907213/Call_for_evidence_on_Contractual_Controls.pdf). It closes on 30 October 2020.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Correspondence**

Catherine West:

[91114]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his Department's average reply time has been for ministerial letters in each of the last five months.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The department aims to respond to all correspondence promptly and ahead of the 20 working days target. The average time taken for MHCLG to respond to letters from MPs and Peers in the last 5 months is as follows: April: 13.4 working days May: 18.0 working days June: 18.9 working days July: 18.7 working days Aug: 18.0 working days

■ Planning

Alberto Costa:

[\[88894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps he has taken to ensure the (a) transparency and (b) integrity of the planning system.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to ensuring the transparency and integrity of the planning system.

The *Planning for the Future White Paper* published on 6 August sets out our proposals for a reformed planning system. Central to that vision is a transparent system where local authorities, communities and developers can engage in an open and transparent way with the planning system, and where there is more certainty about where development is going to take place. By having a simple, clear, more rules based system, which has democracy and community engagement at its core, we will guarantee the integrity of the planning system.

■ Planning Permission

Anthony Browne:

[\[88939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential for proposals in Planning for the Future White Paper, published on 6 August 2020 to tackle the issue of developers obtaining planning permission but not proceeding to build within a reasonable timeframe.

Christopher Pincher:

New homes should be built out as soon as possible once planning permission is granted. We are clear that where sites are stalled or experiencing delays to delivery, it is for local authorities and developers to work closely together at a local level to overcome these barriers.

To support build out through planning, we propose to make it clear in the revised National Planning Policy Framework that the masterplans and design codes for sites prepared for substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types by different builders which allow more phases to come forward together.

We will be exploring further options to support faster build out as part of our proposed planning reforms as outlined in the Planning White Paper.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[90099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what consultation his Department carried out with (a) Salford city council, (b) Greater Manchester resilience forum and (c) other bodies referenced in Schedule 1(1) to the Town and Country Planning (Border Facilities and Infrastructure) (EU Exit) (England) Special Development Order 2020 Order.

Christopher Pincher:

The Special Development Order requires a border department to engage with local authorities and a range of other parties ahead of any submission to my department to seek to use a site for border facilities and associated infrastructure.

Barbara Keeley:[\[90100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that permissions under article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Border Facilities and Infrastructure) (EU Exit) (England) Special Development Order 2020 are subject to consultation with local residents and businesses.

Christopher Pincher:

The Special Development Order does not approve the use of specific sites, and the border departments defined in the Order are required to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to use and develop a specific site.

The Order requires a border department to engage with local authorities and a range of other parties ahead of a formal request for approval to use a site. The Order sets out that a request for approval must include a report setting out the engagement activities that have been undertaken, and the outcomes of those activities. The report should include a statement of the period given to engagement parties to make representation being no less than 14 calendar days.

■ Planning Permission: Local Press**Sarah Champion:**[\[90131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has carried out an impact assessment on the removal of the statutory requirement to publicise planning applications in local newspapers on the (a) number of people who would be excluded from seeing such notices and (b) revenue reduction to local newspapers as a result of the removal of that requirement.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain types of planning applications in local newspapers as set out in Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. In the response to coronavirus restrictions, temporary regulations have been introduced to supplement the existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications. Local planning authorities now have the flexibility to take other reasonable steps to publicise applications if they cannot discharge the specific requirement for newspaper publicity – for instance, if the local newspaper is not now in circulation. These steps can include the use of social media and other electronic communications, such as local online news portals, and must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development. However, if a local planning authority is required to publicise a planning application in a local newspaper, and that paper is still in circulation, then they must continue to do so.

■ Planning: Injunctions

Alberto Costa:

[\[88895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to support local authorities seeking to obtain High Court injunctions in planning disputes.

Christopher Pincher:

Planning injunctions are one of the tools available to local planning authorities to address breaches of planning control. We recently funded the National Association of Planning Enforcement Officers to update their planning enforcement handbook which provides information about these tools to enforcement officers. We will also, as part of our planning reforms set out in the *Planning for the Future* White Paper, be reviewing and strengthening the existing planning enforcement powers and sanctions available to local planning authorities to ensure they support the new planning system.

■ Planning: Natural Resources

Anthony Browne:

[\[88940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the *Planning for the Future* White Paper, published on 6 August 2020 will take account of the limitations set by the availability of natural resources such as water in the allocation of growth zones.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework and its accompanying planning practice guidance expects local planning authorities to plan for the development and co-ordination of the infrastructure required in their area, including infrastructure for water. They should work with providers, such as water companies, to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands. The water companies are already statutory consultees on local plan development and can be consulted on a non-statutory basis for individual planning applications.

In addition, the Building Regulations already provide a water use standard and a lower optional standard for water stressed areas, which a local planning authority can impose for new homes as a condition of planning permission. DEFRA led a consultation on measures to reduce personal water use in 2019, which included this standard. A formal government response will be published by the end of 2020.

The *Planning for the Future* White Paper includes proposals to ensure that all local development plans are assessed against a sustainable development test to ensure there is the right balance between environmental, economic and social objectives. Plans should be informed by appropriate infrastructure planning, and sites should not be included in the plan where there is no reasonable prospect of any infrastructure that may be needed coming forward within the plan period. Plan-making policies in the National Planning Policy Framework will make this clear.

■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus

Sarah Olney:

[\[91123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support renters served a Section 21 between 21 and 29 August who did not qualify for the additional three month extension of the notice period.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes legislating through the Coronavirus Act 2020 to delay when landlords can evict tenants, a 6 month stay on possession proceedings in court and a range of financial support to enable renters to continue paying their living costs, including rental payments. This financial support includes increasing Local Housing Allowance rates so that they are set at the 30th percentile of local market rents in each area, which will remain in place throughout the winter period until at least the end of March 2021.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, landlords serving notice of their intention to seek possession between 21 and 29 August would have been required to give their tenants at least three months notice. Where possession cases do go to court, new court rules mean that landlords are now required to set out any information they are aware of in relation to how their tenant, or any dependant of their tenant has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Where this information is not provided, judges have the ability to adjourn proceedings until such information is provided. Courts will carefully prioritise the most egregious cases, including anti-social behaviour, fraud, and domestic abuse, ensuring landlords are able to progress the most serious cases, such as those involving anti-social behaviour and other crimes. In addition, guidance will also be issued to bailiffs highlighting that they should not enforce possession orders in places where local public health restrictions have been introduced by government through legislation or in England and Wales across 11 December 2020 to 11 January 2021.

■ Private Rented Housing: Rents

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[90163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 87573 on Private Rented Housing: Rents, what statistics the Government is collecting on the number of people in the private rented sector who are in arrears.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has established an unprecedented package of support to protect renters throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and as with all policy making, this is informed by a range of data sources.

■ Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel**Neil Coyle:** [\[91059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel last met; and how many meetings that Panel has held in the last 12 months.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is committed to ending rough sleeping. The Advisory Panel met in June, and ministers and officials have had numerous meetings with panel members over the last 12 months. We are committed to continuing regular conversations and following through on actions taken.

■ Sleeping Rough**Mike Hill:** [\[88926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress his Department has made on ending rough sleeping.

Kelly Tolhurst:

The Government is clear that no one should be without a roof over their head. That is why we have committed to ending rough sleeping within this parliament. The most recent national figures, from the Official 2019 Rough Sleeping Snapshot, showed that the number of people sleeping on our streets on a single night fell for the second year in a row and a reduction on previous year.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund**Steve Reed:** [\[90138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding will be available through his Department's proposed Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to creating a UK Shared Prosperity Fund that tackles inequality and deprivation in each of our four nations, whilst at a minimum matching the size of European structural funds in each nation. Final decisions on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will need to be made through a cross-Government Spending Review, and we will set out further plans for the fund in due course.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia****Emily Thornberry:** [\[88836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 21 May 2015

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88837\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 6 June 2015 air-strike on a house in Bakil Al-Mir was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88839\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 6 July 2015 air-strike on a market in Raydah was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88841\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:[\[88842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 8 June 2015 air-strike on a bus in Lahj was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[88843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 8 June 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Sihar was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[88844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 14 June 2015 air-strike on vehicles in Al-Hazm was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[88845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 16 June 2015 air-strike on vehicles in Tor Al-Bahah was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[88846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 19 July 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Yarim was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:[\[88847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 20 July 2015 air-strike on a residential area in Kitaf Wa Al-Boqe'e was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 16 August 2015 air-strike on a house in Khab Wa Al-Sha'af was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88849\]](#)

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

Emily Thornberry:

[\[88850\]](#)

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

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer the Rt Hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 11th September 2020 (UIN: 84666).

■ **Board of Trade: Climate Change**

Sarah Olney:

[\[91120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that UK climate commitments are a priority for the activities of the Board of Trade.

Graham Stuart:

To ensure the UK's climate commitments are a focus of the Board of Trade, two relevant experts have been appointed as Advisers.

■ **Trade Agreements: China**

Afzal Khan:

[\[91142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of inserting clauses on human rights in future trade deals with China in order to help tackle forced Uyghar labour in that country.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has a strong history of promoting our values globally. We will continue to encourage all states to uphold their international obligations and are clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of rights and responsibilities.

China remains an important trading partner for the United Kingdom and we are pursuing increased bilateral trade, but do not have plans to negotiate a free trade agreement currently.

■ Trade Agreements: Dispute Resolution**Alex Sobel:**[\[90229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the effect of Investor-state dispute settlement cases during the covid-19 pandemic; and is she will take steps to restrict the use of such clauses in relation to matters concerning the Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government recognises the importance of strengthening international investment in response to COVID-19, and the important role played by both investment protection and investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in safeguarding British investors overseas, including pensioners across the country through their pension funds and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

We are clear that HM Government and our treaty partners retain the right to regulate in the public interest, including for public health purposes, and this is already recognised under international law. There has never been a successful ISDS claim against the United Kingdom, nor has the threat of potential claims affected our legislation.

■ Trade Agreements: Japan**Emily Thornberry:**[\[90978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what proportion of the estimated £15.2 billion increase in trade as a result of the UK-Japan free trade agreement announced by her Department on 9 September 2020 is additional to the estimated increase in trade already projected as a result of the UK rolling over the provisions of the existing EU-Japan economic partnership agreement beyond the end of the transition period.

Greg Hands:

The preliminary analysis from the published Scoping Assessment shows that in the long-run a UK-Japan agreement could increase UK-Japan trade by £15.2 billion, compared to a situation where the UK does not have an agreement with Japan. That preliminary analysis does not include an assessment of the proportion of the estimated increase in trade that is attributable to the EU-Japan economic partnership agreement.

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

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

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

Emily Thornberry:

[90979]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the provisions on (a) Government procurement, (b) competition policy, (c) Government subsidies and (d) state-owned enterprises, enterprises granted special rights or privileges and designated monopolies in the UK-Japan free trade agreement have been substantively changed from the equivalent provisions in chapters 10-13 of the EU-Japan economic partnership agreement.

Emily Thornberry:

[90980]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the difference in the application of (a) tariffs, (b) quotas and (c) non-tariff barriers to exports of Stilton cheese to Japan under the (i) UK-Japan free trade agreement and (ii) EU-Japan economic partnership agreement.

Greg Hands:

After the agreement is signed, we will lay the full text in parliament. We will also publish a parliamentary report, setting out in detail any areas where there are material differences between the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

■ Trade and Agriculture Commission

Emily Thornberry:

[90977]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether Mr Shanker Singham (a) attended the meeting of the Trade and Agriculture Commission on 21 August 2020 and (b) was present during the Commission's discussion at that meeting of the need for coherence in the UK's internal market, the importance of the Northern Ireland Protocol, and the role of the Trader Support Scheme set up to ease the burden on Northern Ireland exporters.

Greg Hands:

As a member of the Trade and Agricultural Commission Shanker Singham attended the Commission meeting on 21 August. He was present throughout the Commission meeting.

JUSTICE**■ Child Trust Fund: Fees and Charges****Virginia Crosbie:****[88942]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to remove fees for child trust funds access that may unfairly disadvantage families with children with disabilities.

Chris Philp:

A parent (or a guardian) of a child with a disability can make decisions on their behalf, but only while the child is under 18. In order for the parents of adult children to make decisions on their behalf, including in relation to their financial affairs, they must be granted powers to do so, either by a Lasting Power of Attorney or by authorisation from the Court of Protection – the specialist court that deals with issues concerning a lack of capacity.

Fees are payable in respect of applications to the Court and applications to register Lasting Powers of Attorney. We recognise that these fees may be difficult for some people to afford.

Help with Lasting Power of Attorney registration fees, Court of Protection fees and deputy supervision fees is available, depending upon the financial circumstances of the person who lacks mental capacity, and in some cases a full fee exemption may be available.

■ Crime: Victims**Peter Kyle:****[91098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to (a) develop an online information hub for victims and (b) improve the allocation of funding for victims services as part of the Victims Strategy.

Alex Chalk:

(A) An online hub for victims is already available:

<https://www.victimandwitnessinformation.org.uk/> providing information based on victim need. It also provides a search facility so victims can access free local support based on their needs.

(B) The Government has taken steps to improve the funding for victims services as part of the Victims Strategy. We have brought greater sustainability to the sector through multi-year grant settlements, awarding three-year funding (2019-2022) to provide sexual violence services with greater stability and security to ensure they can focus on delivering their essential services.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, £25 million out of the £76 million government package of support to charities supporting vulnerable people, was ringfenced for sexual violence and domestic abuse support services to ensure they continue providing their vital services.

More recently, in recognition of the complexity of the wider victim support funding landscape, the Government has committed to developing a Victims Funding Strategy underpinned by a new delivery model. This will consider how to place the victim support sector on a more sustainable footing, ensuring that commissioning is joined up and not fragmented between departments and agencies, and to improve service provision.

■ Debt Collection: Regulation

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[91021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to introduce independent regulation of bailiffs to tackle (a) harmful and unnecessary bailiff visits and (b) bailiffs breaking the rules.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice is reviewing the implementation of reforms, contained in the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 and introduced in 2014, which govern how enforcement agents take control of goods. This includes considering complaints handling and regulation in the sector.

We have been focusing on our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but we will provide a response to the review as soon as we are able.

■ Employment Tribunals Service: Applications

Stella Creasy:

[\[90123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2020 to Question 84222 on Employment Tribunals Service: Applications, what the (a) median and (b) mean clearance times were for single and multiple Employment Tribunal claims in quarter 1 of 2020-21.

Stella Creasy:

[\[90124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2020 to Question 84223 on Employment Tribunals Service: Finance, what the outstanding caseload was for Employment Tribunals in quarter 1 of 2020-21.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is a subset of the Tribunal Quarterly Statistics which were due to be published on 10 September 2020, however they have been delayed.

It is intended that full publication will be released as soon as practicably possible and will cover the period up to June 2020.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service publish management information on outstanding workload and average clearance time for single Employment Tribunals. The figures reflect the data held on the case management system and will have some definitional and timing differences from the official statistics. This information can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/hmcts-management-information-july-2020

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Colleen Fletcher:

[90147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appellants are waiting for the Tribunals Service to list their First Tier Tribunal Social Security and Child Support appeal in relation to personal independence payment in (a) Coventry, (b) West Midlands and (c) England.

Chris Philp:

Information about appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support) is published at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics.

As at March 2020 (the latest period for which data are available) there were a total of 440 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) ¹ appeals waiting to be listed in the Coventry venue; 2,466 in the West Midlands ² ; and 21,005 in England ³ .

Social Security & Child Support (SSCS) data is normally registered to the venue nearest to the appellants home address. We cannot retrieve data based on the appellants actual address, but can produce reports detailing the numbers of cases that were dealt with at one of our Regional centres or heard at a specific venue.

1. PIP (New Claim Appeals) which replaces Disability Living Allowance was introduced on 8 April 2013, also includes PIP Claims (Reassessments)

2. West Midlands includes the venues: Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Coventry, Nuneaton, Stoke, Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester.

3. Data excludes SSCS Scotland Region and Wales Region.

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

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

Colleen Fletcher:

[91066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average cost to the public purse is to administer a First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support Appeal) in respect of personal independence payments.

Chris Philp:

Information is held on the overall cost of the First-tier Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support Appeal), which includes the cost of administering Personal Independence Payment appeals, but not at the requested level of granularity. The information that is available can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hm-courts-tribunals-service-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>

■ Prisons

Paula Barker:

[90286]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what comparative assessment he has made of levels of (a) violence and (b) staffing between (i) public and (ii) private prisons.

Lucy Frazer:

The Ministry of Justice does not hold data that makes a comparative assessment of staffing and assaults in public and privately managed prisons.

We publish details on staffing in public prisons every quarter in our HMPPS Workforce Statistics, the latest version is to June 2020 and is available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-june-2020>. We do not hold data on staffing levels in private prisons.

There were 32,800 assaults in prisons in England and Wales in 2019, of which 26,960 were in public prisons (82% of total assaults) and 5,840 were in private prisons (18% of total assaults).

Violence in prisons remains unacceptably high, which is why we are spending £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence and crime behind bars. This will fund tough airport-style security, body scanners and phone-blocking technology.

We are giving officers tools like PAVA pepper spray and body-worn cameras to make their jobs safer.

Our Assaults on Emergency Workers Act increased the maximum penalty for those who attack them to 12 months and we recently announced we will double the penalty further to two years.

HMP Birmingham changed from a private prison to a public prison in July 2019. Therefore, the figures for Birmingham have not been split between the public prisons total and the private prisons total, all assaults in Birmingham for 2019 were recorded as being in private prisons.

■ Private Rented Housing: Evictions

Thangam Debbonaire:

[90164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of orders for repossession of a residential property under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 that are currently live.

Chris Philp:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Public Service: Misconduct**Steve Reed:** [\[90136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when the Law Commission will publish its response to the consultation on reforming the offence of misconduct in public office, which opened in September 2016.

Steve Reed: [\[90137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Law Commission on the Law Commission's consultation reforming the offence of misconduct in public office, which opened in September 2016.

Alex Chalk:

The Law Commission expects to publish their final response and recommendations on Misconduct in Public Office law reform in 2020. The Government will consider and respond to those recommendations in due course.

■ Sentencing: Children**Peter Kyle:** [\[91100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to make an assessment of the effectiveness of short-term custodial sentences below six months in duration for children before bringing forward legislative proposals on sentencing.

Lucy Frazer:

The reoffending rate for children is the highest in the criminal justice system and particularly for those children sentenced to short periods in custody. That is why we are proposing changes to strengthen community sentences, which can be more effective at reducing reoffending, to give courts more confidence in their ability to act as a robust sentencing option. However, we are clear that the courts must always have the option to impose custody, including short custodial sentences where necessary.

■ Sexual Offences: Victim Support Schemes**Rachael Maskell:** [\[88910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much of the funding allocated by his Department through the survivors of sexual violence fund has been (a) allocated to and (b) received by organisations to date.

Alex Chalk:

We are committed to ensuring that sexual violence services are funded to provide victims with the support they need during this challenging time.

£76 million of funding to support victims has been made available during the COVID-19 outbreak with £10 million of this funding ringfenced for sexual violence support services. Of this, £5 million has been allocated by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and £5 million through the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund.

As part of the pandemic response PCCs have received £4,177,891 specifically for sexual violence support services in their respective areas. Sexual violence support services funded through the national Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund have also received £2,605,157 based on their submissions of need.

£233,762 of Covid-19-related funding has also been made available for national remote services providers to enable the expansion and national roll out of digital and helpline services, to ensure that all victims have access to services during this challenging time.

We continue to work across government, with the sector and local bodies through our COVID-19 Victims and Witnesses Silver Command to identify ongoing needs and ensure support is available for victims and witnesses.

■ Young Offenders: Sentencing

Peter Kyle:

[91099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to make an assessment of the potential effect on capacity in young offender institutions of proposed changes to youth sentencing before bringing forward legislative proposals.

Lucy Frazer:

The Smarter Approach to Sentencing White Paper, which was published on 16 September 2020, included impact assessments which outline the impact the proposed changes would have on Youth Custody Services (YCS).

The Government is aware that the Youth Custody Service may face an increased population due to some individuals spending longer in custody than they otherwise would. However, our assessment has shown that reform of the Detention and Training Order will result in an increase in the youth custody population of fewer than 50 offenders in steady state by 2024/25.

The impact assessments can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-smarter-approach-to-sentencing>.

The YCS regularly reviews capacity of youth secure establishments, engaging with secure settings to ensure that children continue to be placed based on their needs and requirements, which may change over time.

■ Youth Courts

Peter Kyle:

[90191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how long the backlog in youth courts was in each quarter since the second quarter of 2015.

Chris Philp:

JUN-16	SEP-16	DEC-16	MAR-17	JUN-17	SEP-17	DEC-17	MAR-18
10,283	10,291	10,616	10,256	10,434	10,188	10,324	9,926
JUN-18	SEP-18	DEC-18	MAR-19	JUN-19	SEP-19	DEC-19	MAR-20
9,847	9,786	9,636	9,568	9,826	9,485	9,569	9,938

Data show number of outstanding youth cases in each quarter. It should be noted that this data has only been captured nationally since April 2016

Peter Kyle:

[90192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of time from (a) offence to charge and (b) offence to completion in the youth courts was in each quarter since the second quarter of 2015.

Chris Philp:

The data requested is published by the Youth Justice Board and can be found here (in Annex E-average time from offence to completion):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2018-to-2019>

Please note that the figures for 2020 have not yet been published.

TRANSPORT

■ Active Travel England and National Cycling and Walking Commissioner: Public Appointments

Olivia Blake:

[90301]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timescale is for establishing Active Travel England; what powers that inspectorate will have; what the appointment process is for the National Cycling and Walking Commissioner; and what parliamentary oversight there will be of that appointment process.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is committed to making rapid progress in establishing Active Travel England, and also to ensuring that proper consideration is given to these and other important matters. It is essential, for example, that the correct processes are followed in line with Cabinet Office Guidance on the creation of new Arm's-Length Bodies.

The Government's Cycling and Walking Plan, published in July, sets out some of the roles and functions that the new body is likely to have. These include holding the budget for, as well as approving and inspecting, cycling and walking schemes; disseminating training and good practice; and reviewing major planning applications to help improve the provision of cycling and walking facilities.

Further details on the role of, and appointment process for, the new National Cycling and Walking Commissioner will be made available in due course.

■ **Aviation: Sweden**

Wera Hobhouse: [\[88925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's guidance on travel corridors during the covid-19 outbreak, what plans he has to include Sweden on that list.

Robert Courts:

Sweden was added to the Travel Corridors list on Saturday 12 August.

■ **Cars: Hire Services**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[90961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, in relation to the Government's covid-19 guidance on private hire cars, for what reason the wearing of face coverings is not mandatory in those vehicles; what the medical evidence is to support that decision; and what plans he has to review that decision.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has published safer transport guidance on the safe provision of transport services during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidance to passengers says that passengers should wear a face covering when using taxis or private hire vehicles. Taxi drivers are able to refuse carriage to passengers where it is reasonable to do so, and private hire vehicle operators can make wearing a face covering a condition of hiring. We are aware of private hire vehicle operators that are doing this and requiring the driver they work with to do the same. We continually review guidance for safer transport in line with scientific advice.

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

Derek Twigg: [\[90046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and what proportion of the DVLA workforce are currently (a) working at DVLA premises and (b) processing driving licences.

Rachel Maclean:

All Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) staff who can work from home continue to do so as office space has been prioritised for operational staff who have to be on-site to process paper applications. The DVLA's online services have worked well throughout the pandemic and this remains the quickest and easiest way of making applications.

The DVLA is employing shift patterns, staggered start times, weekend working and other measures to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. Due to this, the number of staff who can be on-site at any one time is greatly reduced but the working

day has been significantly extended. This means that almost all DVLA operational staff are now working on-site but not all at the same time.

Staff are allocated to different work streams at different times depending on where the need is greatest. All driving licences and driving entitlement expiring between 1 February 2020 and 31 December 2020 have been extended for 11 months. This means that no drivers currently need to apply to renew a driving licence or driving entitlement.

■ Driving Licences: Applications

John Spellar:

[\[88812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September to Question 77508 on Motor Vehicles: Excise Duties, how many paper driving licence applications were waiting to be processed on 7 September 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

The number of paper driving licence applications waiting to be processed fluctuates on a daily basis as licences are issued and new applications received. On 7 September, there were 109,940 paper driving licence applications sent directly to the DVLA, awaiting processing.

■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

Afzal Khan:

[\[88928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 September 2020 to Question 81866 on on Driving Tests: Coronavirus, what evidence was used to inform the decision not lay further legislation to extend the validity period of the theory test certificate .

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has refreshed the content of the theory driving test twice in the last two years. The Government is concerned the knowledge and understanding of driving theory for those candidates who passed the test more than two years ago would be out of date. This would present a clear road safety risk.

Ian Mearns:

[\[90120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to increase capacity for (a) practical and (b) theory driving tests throughout the UK to tackle backlogs accrued as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

From 14 September 2020, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) extended the period in which practical driving tests are available to book from six to eighteen weeks ahead between 14 September 2020 and the end of 21 January 2021. This has added up to 375,000 new and rescheduled tests. As well as increasing available tests up to 18 weeks ahead, from 19 October 2020, driving examiners will be conducting six car tests a day rather than five. This will help to reduce the backlog

for candidates wanting to book a practical driving test in the UK, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Theory tests in England resumed on 4 July 2020 and in Wales they resumed on 3 August, with new social distancing and safety precautions in place. Theory test centres in England and Wales have reduced social distancing to one metre plus, which has increased the number of theory tests available. Theory tests in Scotland resumed on 22 July. The DVSA's ability to increase theory testing capacity in Scotland is being affected by the current social distancing rules of two metres. Since 4 July 2020, the DVSA has delivered 406,395 theory tests in England, Scotland and Wales.

Testing capacity has now increased across all the 151 theory test sites in England, Scotland and Wales, where the DVSA is able to do so, and the number of theory tests sites available has also increased to a total of 172 across the UK, with an increase of four more theory test sites in England and seven more theory test sites available in the more remote areas of Scotland. In Wales there are currently 10 open sites.

The DVSA will continue to provide regular updates on its Twitter and Facebook pages whilst the booking service is live to keep everyone updated on the availability of driving tests. It has also created an information page on GOV.UK that is updated every half an hour where candidates can check the availability of tests at their local test centre.

■ **Electric Scooters: Hire Services**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[91017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what e-scooter trials are (a) operational and (b) in the planning phase.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[91018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on establishing the evaluation arrangements for e-scooter rental trials.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[91019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what criteria his Department will use to determine whether e-scooter rental trials are successful.

Rachel Maclean:

E-scooter trials are underway in Tees Valley, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, the West Midlands and Staffordshire. Trials have been approved in Norfolk, York, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Cambridge and Peterborough, Liverpool, Nottingham and Derby, Redditch, Kent and Slough and these will start soon. The Department is also assessing proposals for trials in some other local areas.

Data sharing agreements have been or will be put in place between the Department and the e-scooter operator(s) before a trial can commence. This will provide data on the number and types of journeys completed by e-scooters. The Department is in the

process of setting up a large multi-disciplinary contract for the national evaluation of the trials. This will consist of data analysis as well as qualitative and quantitative primary research.

The evaluation will assess some key issues: the safety risks presented by e-scooters; the mode shift to e-scooters from other forms of transport; public perceptions around their use; and other identified impacts from their use. These will inform a decision on whether e-scooters should be legalised and what a suitable form of regulation for e-scooters would be.

■ Eurostar: Kent

Rosie Duffield:

[\[90205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the potential financial effect of the withdrawal of Eurostar services from (a) Ebbsfleet International and (b) Ashford International on the economy of Kent until 2022.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Eurostar has announced that it will no longer be stopping at Ashford and Ebbsfleet International stations until 2022, due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19. This was a commercial decision taken by Eurostar in response to the severe decline in passenger numbers.

As this is a commercial decision taken by Eurostar very recently, the Government has not undertaken an economic analysis of the impacts of these changes. Nevertheless, the Government is keen to see the reinstatement of services once international travel recovers and it is commercially viable to do so.

Rosie Duffield:

[\[90207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of Eurostar on the restoration of Eurostar services at (a) Ebbsfleet International and (b) Ashford International.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department has been engaging extensively with international rail operators, including Eurostar, on a regular basis since the beginning of the outbreak to monitor closely the impact of Covid-19 and to support the continuation of important international rail connections.

The Government recognises the unprecedented circumstances currently faced by the international travel industry including Eurostar as a result of Covid-19. Whilst the stopping of services is a commercial decision for the company in response to Covid-19, Eurostar services continue to provide important benefits and connections and the Government is keen to see the reinstatement of services once international travel recovers and it is commercially viable to do so.

The Department will continue to engage closely with Eurostar on this important matter.

■ Ferries: Coronavirus

Stephen Morgan:

[\[90213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the ability of ferry companies to resume their services of increasing the number of people being tested for covid-19 on arrival at ports.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[90214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the ability of Portsmouth International Port to resume offering passenger services of increasing the number of people being tested for covid-19 on arrival at that port.

Robert Courts:

The Government has worked closely with all parts of the maritime sector, including Portsmouth International Port, to ensure that ferry services can continue to operate throughout the pandemic. We have provided guidance to both ports and ferry companies on safe operating practices to address the risks of Covid-19.

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

■ Northern Transport Acceleration Council: Public Appointments

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[91020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether members of the Northern Transport Acceleration Council have been appointed; on what basis those appointments will be made; and if he will publish that Council's relationship to (a) Transport for the North and (b) the Department's Transport Acceleration Unit.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Secretary of State has invited all Northern Metro Mayors and leaders to be members of the Northern Transport Acceleration Council.

The Council is a forum to discuss priority transport projects and make sure they are being progressed at pace, providing a mechanism for speeding up decision making. The work of the Acceleration Unit will support it in doing so. TfN will continue its role of bringing together members and developing strategic advice for the Department.

■ Parking: Large Goods Vehicles**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[90958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the construction timeframe for the new lorry parks set to be built in 29 council areas across the UK as part of new customs infrastructure.

Rachel Maclean:

I am responding to this question as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport.

The inclusion of a local authority within the Special Development Order does not necessarily indicate that a temporary inland border facility will be required in that area.

The local authority areas have been identified within the Order by the border departments so that should inland border facilities be required to support relevant ports, these can be provided within a reasonable distance of a port and/or strategic highway network.

The location of any new inland sites will be determined by what ports are able to build. The Government is continuing its discussions with ports to establish the extent of new infrastructure capacity at ports and if an inland site will be needed. Further information on inland sites will be shared once available at the earliest opportunity.

■ Ports: Coronavirus**Stephen Morgan:** [\[90215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on the financial security of ports that offer passenger services of the Government's strategy of using quarantine as a method for tackling the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

The Department has worked closely with all parts of the maritime sector, including our ports and their Trade Associations, as they have continued to operate throughout the pandemic and provide vital freight and passenger services. As the economy continues its safe re-opening, we will continue to engage widely across the maritime sector to understand any challenges they face, including the ongoing financial health of maritime companies and our ports.

■ Public Inquiries**Philip Davies:** [\[88852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June to Question 62617, if he will provide a list of the (a) statutory and (b) non-statutory public inquiries currently being undertaken by his Department.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is not undertaking any inquiries. It is currently contributing to the Home Office's inquiry into the Manchester Arena attack.

Railway Stations: Kent**Rosie Duffield:**[\[90206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people have (a) departed from and (b) arrived in the UK at (i) Ebbsfleet International and (ii) Ashford International in each of the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department publishes annual data on international rail traffic via the Channel Tunnel, including passenger services via Eurostar and Eurotunnel Le Shuttle. This data is available here ([link](#)). The Department, however, does not hold disaggregated data for passenger arrivals and departures by international rail station.

Railways: Concessions**Alex Norris:**[\[91139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether rail operators plan to extend railcards due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department recognises that Railcard holders have been unable to use their cards while travel restrictions were in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are considering a range of options for all Railcard holders, and continue to work closely with the Rail Delivery Group and the wider industry to consider how best to support passengers in light of the COVID-19 related travel restrictions and returning to the railway

Railways: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**Rosie Duffield:**[\[90209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential effect of the ending of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on levels of job losses in the international rail transport sector.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government fully recognises the significant financial challenges facing international rail operators as a result of Covid-19 and the unprecedented circumstances currently faced by the international travel industry. The Department has therefore been working closely with international rail operators to access business support schemes, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), where appropriate, while operators have also been able to access equivalent schemes in other countries. Cabinet Ministers are in close contact over this issue.

■ Tourism: Caerphilly**Wayne David:**[\[90060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on ensuring that residents of Caerphilly Borough are able to claim refunds on holidays they are unable to take as a result of the local covid-19 lockdown.

Robert Courts:

The legal obligations of airlines to issue refunds is a reserved matter. The CAA is the independent regulator that enforces these obligations of airlines across the whole of the UK.

Both the CAA and the Department have urged travel businesses to act fairly and offer a refund to all customers who are entitled, depending on the terms and conditions of the contract in place. Consumers who are entitled to refund should contact travel providers or their credit card issuers for reimbursement.

TREASURY**■ Bank Cards: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[88898\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the potential discriminatory effect on certain consumers of some retail, hospitality and other outlets only accepting card payments.

John Glen:

The Government recognises the importance of cash access to millions of people across the UK, including those who are vulnerable. That is why, at March Budget 2020, Government committed to bring forward legislation to protect access to cash for those who need it, and ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the long run. Treasury is working at pace to develop legislation.

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

■ Beer: Excise Duties**Grahame Morris:**[\[90113\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 86639, whether he plans to publish a proposed taper (a) before or (b) with that consultation to enable small breweries to understand the potential effect of those proposals on their businesses.

Grahame Morris:

[\[90114\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department made of market access when carrying out the review of Small Brewers' Relief.

Grahame Morris:

[\[90115\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what level of duty relief is planned under proposals to convert Small Brewers' Relief to a cash basis.

Grahame Morris:

[\[90116\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to link duty relief to inflation under proposals to convert Small Brewers' Relief to a cash basis.

Kemi Badenoch:

The taper for the Small Brewers Relief (SBR) scheme is a matter for the consultation that will take place this Autumn. Brewers are free to put forward their own proposals, and several have already done so.

There is very little evidence to suggest any impact on market access as a result of SBR.

The value of SBR when first converted to a cash basis will be the same as now. Decisions about increases will be kept under review and will be a matter for future announcements. The Government will consult on how to ensure SBR retains a fair value as part of the further consultation this Autumn.

Grahame Morris:

[\[90117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the changes to Small Brewers' Relief on pubs.

Kemi Badenoch:

As Small Brewers Relief benefits small brewers not pubs, no impact is expected on pubs as a result of these changes.

■ **British Council: Coronavirus**

Mr John Baron:

[\[90949\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to provide financial support to the British Council during the covid-19 pandemic.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury has been working closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to support the British Council. This includes the provision of a further £26 million of funding in 2019/20, and a loan of £60 million this financial year.

■ Bus Services: Coronavirus

Derek Twigg: [\[90045\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he make an assessment of the potential merits of extending (a) VAT deferral and (b) the Time to Pay scheme for the coach industry to help ensure that no coaches are repossessed during winter 2020-21.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has put in place an unprecedented package of support for businesses and individuals affected by COVID-19. This includes the deferment of VAT and Self-Assessment payments for specified periods, with interest on these deferred payments waived. The VAT deferral ended at the end of June as planned, and payments are now due as normal.

HMRC's Time to Pay scheme continues to be available to any taxpayer in temporary financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities, including those in the coach industry. Time to Pay agreements are tailored to each taxpayer's circumstances and can include deferment of tax payments and an agreed time period to repay. They can cover any tax liability including VAT.

Any taxpayer with an existing Time to Pay arrangement that finds their circumstances have changed as a result of COVID-19 should contact HMRC to discuss their situation. HMRC's dedicated COVID-19 helpline can be reached on 0800 024 1222.

■ Cash Dispensing

Rachel Hopkins: [\[88949\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals on protecting access to cash.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[88950\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department plans to take to protect access to cash.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[88951\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has undertaken an impact assessment of the covid-19 pandemic's effect on access to cash for (a) disabled and (b) elderly people.

John Glen:

The Government remains committed to legislating on cash as announced by the Chancellor at March 2020 Budget. The legislation will ensure continued access to cash for those that rely on it and that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable in the long-term.

The Treasury is working at pace to develop this legislation, and is engaging closely with the Payment Systems Regulator, Financial Conduct Authority and Bank of England, including through the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group, to ensure its approach to legislation reflects the needs of cash users across the economy. The

authorities are also currently leading an ambitious programme of work with industry to reach consensus on cash access solutions in line with the Government's objectives.

The Government and regulators are monitoring developments relating to COVID-19 closely, including monitoring the impacts on cash access, and working with industry so that banks, building societies, credit unions and Post Offices maintain essential banking services as needed, including cash access.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[88904]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the news story, Chancellor sets out extra £750 million coronavirus funding for frontline charities, published on 8 April 2020, how much of the £60 million allocated to the devolved administrations has been (a) allocated and (b) received by organisations in the devolved regions to date; and how much was allocated to each devolved administration.

Steve Barclay:

On 24 July, the UK Government made an unprecedented upfront guarantee to the devolved administrations. The UK Government guaranteed that they will receive at least £12.7bn in additional resource funding this year on top of their Spring Budget funding. The Scottish Government has been guaranteed £6.5bn, the Welsh Government £4bn, and the Northern Ireland Executive £2.2bn. The Barnett consequential associated with the coronavirus funding for charities will make up a part of these guarantees.

It is for the devolved administrations to decide how much of their funding they use to support charitable organisations within their respective nations.

■ **Child Benefit: Coronavirus**

John Lamont:

[91128]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of compensating people who were unable to claim child benefit due to delays in receiving their child's birth certificate as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced on 7 April 2020 that, as General Register Offices were closed or operating at a reduced capacity during the COVID-19 outbreak, HM Revenue and Customs would allow parents to claim Child Benefit for their newborns without having to register their child's birth first, to ensure they did not miss out on Child Benefit payments. Child Benefit can be backdated for up to three months.

The press release announcing these measures is at:

www.gov.uk/government/news/dont-miss-out-claim-child-benefit-by-phone-or-post-hmrc-tells-new-parents

■ Children: Day Care

Peter Kyle:

[90190]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will waive the repayment of the childcare element of working tax credit for working parents who lacking adequate childcare provision over summer 2020 used non-Ofsted-registered childcare to retain their jobs.

Steve Barclay:

It is important that children get the best start in life, good quality childcare can help with this and we want to ensure that families have access to this.

Without a definition of standards, the quality of childcare can be variable. A consistent regulatory regime for childcare helps ensure children receive the relevant safeguarding and quality standards. This is why, to be entitled to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, the childcare service used must be registered with the appropriate authority.

Those registered childcare providers were able to continue to provide childcare to key worker and vulnerable children throughout summer 2020.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Sir Christopher Chope:

[90033]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it Government policy that businesses which voluntarily repay furlough payments to the Government are not subject to tax on those payments; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

Voluntary repayments of furlough grants are already not subject to tax because repayment is predicated on the business acknowledging that they are not entitled to the grant and will not be taxed on returning it. A business is only liable to be taxed on a furlough grant if such a business retains a grant to which it is not entitled. A business which informs HMRC of its erroneous claims or overclaims within the notification period and which voluntarily repays the grant will not be taxed on the grant.

Rachael Maskell:

[90180]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what modelling his Department has undertaken to understand the effect on job losses of not extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

After eight months of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), the scheme will close. The CJRS must be temporary and the Government must ensure people can get back to work safely and get the UK economy up and running again.

Building on the action taken in the face of the immediate threat posed by the virus, the Government is now proceeding with the second phase of its response, through a targeted Plan for Jobs which will support the UK's economic recovery while

continuing to make people's health a priority. This plan includes introducing a new Job Retention Bonus to encourage firms to keep on furloughed workers, providing £1.2 billion to significantly expand and enhance work search support, as well as additional support to people to build the skills they need to get into work, and the new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, creating hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Railways**

Rosie Duffield:

[90208]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for the international rail transport sector.

Emma Hardy:

[90212]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of extending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond October 2020 for the theatre and art industries.

Jesse Norman:

It would be challenging to target the CJRS to specific sectors in a fair and deliverable way, and it may not be the case that this is the most effective or sensible way to provide longer term support for those sectors most affected by coronavirus. It would also be difficult to target the CJRS at specific sectors without creating distortion, particularly as some firms work across multiple sectors. Specific firms may benefit from other measures, including the Small Business Grant Fund and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. It is the case that some firms will be affected by coronavirus for longer than others and the Government will continue to keep the situation under review.

■ **Duty Free Allowances**

Seema Malhotra:

[91047]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on airports of the proposals he made in the Consultation on the potential approach to duty- and tax-free goods arising from the UK's new relationship with the EU: A summary of responses, published by his Department in September 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

Ahead of the end of the transition period, the Government has announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage to or from Great Britain. The following rules will apply from 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom will be able to purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.

- Personal allowances will apply to passengers entering Great Britain from a destination outside of the United Kingdom, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales of non-excise goods and the VAT Retail Export Scheme will not be extended to passengers travelling to the EU, and will be withdrawn for all passengers.

The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales currently affects airports that fly to non-EU destinations. The extension of duty-free sales to EU bound passengers will be a significant boost to all airports in England, Scotland and Wales, including Heathrow and smaller regional airports which have not been able to offer duty-free before.

The Government also recognises the challenges the aviation sector is facing as it recovers from the impacts of Covid-19 and has supported the sector throughout the pandemic, and continues to do so, including schemes to raise capital, flexibilities with tax bills, and financial support for employees.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Mick Whitley:

[90252]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to make financial support available to people suffering long-term effects of covid-19 and who are unable to work as a result of their symptoms.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has committed to an unprecedented package to support individuals affected by COVID-19 through this difficult time. This includes the introduction of the Coronavirus Job Retention and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes.

If an employee earns average weekly earnings of at least £120 per week, they will be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they have been ill or self-isolating. SSP is paid by an employer for up to 28 weeks and may be paid to those unable to work as a result of long-term effects of COVID-19. The Government has also changed the rules so that SSP is now payable from day 1, not day 4, for COVID-19 cases.

Where an individual is not eligible for SSP or has received it for the maximum period, the Government provides a welfare safety net. According to OBR estimates, the Government has injected a further £9.3 billion into the welfare system to support individuals who are unable to work or on a low income. Those with a health condition which prevents them from working or preparing for work may be entitled to an extra amount of Universal Credit. In addition, individuals with sufficient National Insurance contributions may be entitled to "new style" Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if they are incapable of work due to COVID-19.

■ First Time Buyers: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[91069\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) mortgage rates and (b) range of mortgage products available to first-time buyers.

John Glen:

There has been a reduction in the number of products at all loan-to-value (LTV) levels as lenders have focused resources towards their existing customers requiring support. While this has limited the availability of higher LTV lending some products do remain available. There has also been a slight rise in mortgage rates, although they remain competitive by historical standards. Overall mortgage lending is recovering, with the number of mortgage approvals approaching pre-Covid levels.

We continue to work closely with mortgage lenders to understand the current considerations for lending. However, product availability and pricing remain commercial decisions for lenders, which the Government does not seek to intervene in.

■ Hospitality Industry: Tax Allowances

Neil Coyle:

[\[90142\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a tax-break-based hospitality voucher scheme to support businesses in the UK.

Neil Coyle:

[\[91063\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on introducing a tax-break-based hospitality voucher scheme to support businesses in the UK.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government understands the acute impact the pandemic is having on the hospitality sector. This sector is a vital source of employment across the country, and that is why – in addition to the CJRS, tax deferrals and loans – we have prioritised support for hospitality businesses and introduced several targeted measures to protect jobs. This includes:

- A 12-month business rates holiday for all eligible retail, leisure and hospitality businesses in England
- The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund
- The Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, which subsidised 100 million meals through August
- A temporary reduction in the VAT rate from 20% to 5% on most tourism and hospitality-related activities.

The Government is continuing to collect evidence on the impact of the pandemic, including on specific sectors, and to work with businesses and representative groups to inform our efforts to support the recovery as we head into the Autumn.

The Chancellor and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy meet regularly to discuss support for businesses and the economy as a whole.

■ **Poverty: Newport West**

Ruth Jones: [\[91153\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to tackle poverty in Newport West constituency.

Steve Barclay:

The Government is committed to tackling poverty through a long-term, sustainable approach that focuses on employment, whilst ensuring everyone is supported by the welfare system in their time of need. Today, we are rightly focused on how we can support people through Covid-19.

We have put in place an unprecedented package of support – including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, and a package of welfare measures which the Office of Budget Responsibility estimates to be worth over £9bn, helping to protect incomes, jobs, and support those most in need. This package of temporary welfare measures includes a £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance, and an increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of market rents.

In its Plan for Jobs, the Government has announced unprecedented support to help unemployed people find a job. The support is available across Great Britain and includes measures that will be delivered at a local level through DWP's extensive network of over 600 Job Centre Plus branches.

In addition to this, on 24 July, we made an upfront guarantee to the Welsh Government guaranteeing that they will receive at least £4bn in additional resource funding for this year.

■ **Research: Tax Allowances**

Patrick Grady: [\[91082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) obligations and (b) timescales are in place to require organisations in receipt of Research and Development tax breaks to publish the outcome of their research in public.

Patrick Grady: [\[91083\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merit of requiring organisations in receipt of Research and Development tax breaks to publish the outcome of their research in public after a set period of time.

Patrick Grady: [\[91084\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has in place to prevent organisations that benefit from research and development tax breaks from duplicating (a) their own and (b) other organisations' research.

Jesse Norman:

R&D tax credits are a key part of the Government's support for innovative business investment and provided £4.4 billion to businesses across the UK in 2016-17. The Government does not place an obligation on organisations to publish any intellectual property which arises from their research.

Patents are publicly available and so any R&D that leads to a patent will be made public. It would be impractical to require greater disclosure than this; for example, it could potentially reveal trade secrets and it would also impose a significant administrative burden, both factors that would be likely to prevent companies from claiming.

In some circumstances the same work can attract research and development relief for more than one company, as is envisaged in paragraph eleven of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Guidelines regulations. These regulations specify which activities are to be treated as being research and development.

■ Self-employed: Coronavirus**Neil Gray:**[\[90139\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support is available to self-employed workers who have to self isolate (a) once or (b) repeatedly due to themselves or a personal contact testing positive for covid-19.

Steve Barclay:

The government is committed to supporting self-employed individuals financially through this difficult time. The self-employed whose businesses have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 because they are self-isolating may be eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which remains open for applications until the 19 October.

As announced on 20 September the government will introduce a new package to support and enforce self-isolation. People required to self-isolate who are on a low income, cannot work from home and have lost income as a result will be eligible for a payment of £500. Just under 4 million people who are in receipt of benefits in England will be eligible for this payment from 28 September.

These measures sit alongside a comprehensive welfare offer. According to OBR estimates, the government has injected a further £9.3bn into the welfare system to support individuals who are unable to work or on a low income, including for the self-employed. For those on low incomes, the government has relaxed the UC minimum income floor for all self-employed claimants. Self-employed individuals are eligible for "new style" Contributory Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if they are incapable of work due to Covid-19, including those who are required to self-isolate according to Government guidance. We have made it easier for people to claim new style ESA by removing the seven-day waiting period which means people can get support from day one.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Karin Smyth:

[\[90169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what criteria are used to decide whether to allow an appeal for a Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant application; how many SEISS applications have been allowed an appeal; and how many of those applications subsequently had their decisions reversed since that scheme was introduced.

Jesse Norman:

The review process for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is a non-statutory process put in place by HMRC to provide additional protection to customers. There is no legal right of appeal against decisions made in relation to the SEISS, and there is also no legal provision for 'reasonable excuse' within the legal framework for SEISS.

HMRC have limited discretion in operating the SEISS and any exercise of this discretion must be rational and justifiable on the grounds of good management and administration. This discretion can only be used in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances could include situations where HMRC have made an error which has affected an individual's eligibility for, or amount of, a SEISS grant.

HMRC publish statistical information through structured Management Information and statistical releases on GOV.UK. They are currently working through the analysis they are able to provide based on the data available. HMRC will give an update in due course on the types of data available and timing for publication.

■ Tax Avoidance: British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88947\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to reduce tax avoidance in (a) Bermuda, (b) the Cayman Islands, (c) the British Virgin Islands, (d) Anguilla, (e) the Turks and Caicos Islands, (f) Montserrat, (g) Gibraltar, (h) the Channel Islands, and (i) the Isle of Man.

Jesse Norman:

The Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories are autonomous jurisdictions with their own democratically elected governments, who have the mandate to decide their own fiscal policies. However, thanks to UK leadership, all Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories with a financial centre have made commitments to implementing global standards on tax transparency.

■ UK Government Investments

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[90951\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2020 to Question 86572 on UK Government Investments, whether that list of declared interests is publicly available.

John Glen:

The declared interests of UKGI's staff and non-executive directors are not made public. UKGI's website and annual report and accounts contains short biographies of its non-executive directors which includes disclosure of significant external appointments.

■ Working Tax Credit: Coronavirus**Bill Esterson:**[\[91028\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the financial effect on working tax credits received by health and social care workers of additional hours that have been worked during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The Tax Credit system has a degree of flexibility built in, in order to help claimants manage changes in income. The Tax Credit disregard means that the first £2,500 of a increase or decrease in household income, compared with the previous tax year is disregarded. Therefore carers, NHS staff and other key workers working additional hours and experiencing an increase in income of up to £2,500 per year will see no change in their overall Tax Credit award.

The Government also recognises that Tax Credits were introduced in the early 2000s and no longer fully reflect the world of work for many people. That is why we are introducing Universal Credit.

Universal Credit replaces Tax Credits and other legacy benefits, to provide a single system of means-tested support for working age people. Universal Credit is assessed and paid monthly and is based on claimants' actual earnings in the month, rather than their annual income.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance****Marion Fellows:**[\[91085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness in preventing fraudulent samples being provided of the DNA testing used by the Child Maintenance Service.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service DNA testing process requires the person attending the DNA sampling to provide photographic evidence and the DNA test sampler to verify that the person attending is the person in the photo. The photos are retained in case of future challenge.

If a negative DNA test result is challenged, it is referred to the Financial Investigation Unit's Criminal Division for investigation.

Those found to be abusing the system are subject to the full extent of our enforcement powers and the Child Maintenance Service will pursue these, where appropriate.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Recruitment**

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[90171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff have been recruited to her Department (a) at each location and (b) in each category of work in each week since July 2020.

Mims Davies:

DWP has 877 locations and has recruited into over a quarter of these during July and August 2020. The number of staff recruited by each Group and number of locations is as follows:

BUSINESS GROUP	MONTH	NUMBER OF STAFF RECRUITED	NUMBER OF LOCATIONS	
August 2020	Change	July 2020	0	0
	Less than 5	1		
August 2020	Communications	July 2020	0	0
	Less than 5	1		
August 2020	Digital	July 2020	11	5
	13	6		
August 2020	Finance	July 2020	Less than 3	5
	Less than 5	3		
August 2020	People and Capability	July 2020	Less than 2	5
	Less than 5	2		
August 2020	Policy	July 2020	6	2
	15	6		
August 2020	Service Excellence	July 2020	Less than 2	5
	7	5		

BUSINESS GROUP	MONTH	NUMBER OF STAFF RECRUITED	NUMBER OF LOCATIONS	
	Work and Health	July 2020	680	171
August 2020	1095	125		
Total		1846	334	

Data has been provided by month and to end August 2020 as weekly data is not available for all recruitment.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [\[90172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions her Department has had with staff representatives in the Department on its recruitment programme.

Mims Davies:

Since 1 April 2020 the Department has held regular discussions with our Departmental Trade Union Side on our recruitment programme. Specific discussions on recruitment have taken place on at least ten separate occasions.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[90162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2020 to Question 905164, what new and existing data sources her Department is monitoring to understand the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on people who are (a) disabled or (b) have a health condition; and if she will publish her Department's analysis of that data.

Justin Tomlinson:

We continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people and those with health conditions using a range of sources. There will however be a period until the data needed to fully assess the impact becomes available.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is publishing a rolling programme of data and articles relating to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, with specific outputs on disabled people in Great Britain.

The ONS also publishes quarterly statistics on the labour market status of disabled people.

The Department for Work and Pensions publishes statistics annually on the employment of disabled people. The first report was published in March 2020, including data from the Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey and Understanding Society.

Research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of COVID-19 and the number of people likely to be experiencing them is ongoing.

■ **Employment: Coronavirus**

Mick Whitley: [90249]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will take steps to encourage employers to (a) recognise the condition of long covid and (b) take into account employees' long-term symptoms of that condition.

Mick Whitley: [90251]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans her Department has to produce guidance for employers on the treatment of people experiencing long-term effects of covid-19.

Justin Tomlinson:

I refer the hon Member to my response to [85966](#)

■ **Jobcentres: Coronavirus**

Chris Stephens: [R] [90170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many job centres have closed as a result of safety concerns in relation to covid-19 since 1 August 2020; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

No job centres have closed as a result of safety concerns since the 1 August 2020.

■ **Kickstart Scheme**

Steve McCabe: [90037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many representatives are required from a group of employers to form an application for the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Employers looking to offer roles to fewer than 30 Kickstart applicants over the life of the scheme are able to bid for Kickstart funding via an intermediary, or representative, organisation. Intermediaries can gather employers keen to offer Kickstart jobs to make a collective bid to fund 30 or more vacancies.

Smaller employers will have support from their intermediary to create high quality roles and additional support so that young people get the most out of their placement, this also reduces the administrative burden falling on the small employer.

The department has received significant interest from a wide range of bodies including local authorities, charities and trade/industry bodies looking to help small organisations deliver Kickstart jobs for young people at risk of long term unemployment. There is no limit to the number of employers one intermediary can work with, so long as they are capable of supporting them all through the process.

Intermediaries can also apply to add additional Kickstart jobs and new employers to their portfolio after they have had an initial bid approved to fund 30 or more Kickstart jobs.

Steve McCabe:

[90038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications to be a representative of a group of employers from (a) the West Midlands and (b) the UK her Department has received for the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Kickstart Scheme only opened to applications on 2 September, and already thousands of employers have expressed interest in providing Kickstart opportunities for young people. We are pleased to confirm that the department is now processing these applications from across the UK, this is currently a clerical process, so reliable management information, particularly on geographical areas, is not yet available.

■ **Kickstart Scheme: Birmingham**

Steve McCabe:

[90039]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches in Birmingham will be assigned to the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

All Work Coaches across the Jobcentre network, including those based in Birmingham, will be able to make referrals to the Kickstart scheme.

DWP are recruiting additional Work Coaches nationally including in Birmingham, the first wave of which are starting to arrive now and will be fully in place by the end of October with further planned recruitment later in the year which will grow capacity even further.

Additional employment support will also be available to young people in Birmingham via the Birmingham Youth Hub, due to open on 30 September 2020. Working in partnership with key local partners, including the Princes Trust and the Local Authority Care Leaver Team, the Hub will provide young people with support to access employment and training opportunities

■ **Pension Funds: Energy and Infrastructure**

Sir John Hayes:

[88817]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to encourage pension scheme investment in (a) infrastructure and (b) energy provision.

Guy Opperman:

The Government is taking action to encourage pension scheme investment in infrastructure and energy provision and support this approach.

We are committed to enabling more diverse investments for pensions schemes that will improve returns to savers and support important sectors of the UK economy as such as infrastructure and energy, as we build back better.

On the 11th September we published a consultation *Improving outcomes for members of defined contribution pension schemes* which includes measures to enable defined contribution pension schemes to more easily invest in long-term assets like green technology, venture capital, and infrastructure by allowing longer-term calculation methods for performance fees.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-outcomes-for-members-of-defined-contribution-pension-schemes>

We also want pension scheme members to benefit from well-run pension schemes that have sufficient scale to invest in assets such as energy and infrastructure, and that provide good value for money. Therefore, the consultation also includes proposals on a more comprehensive value for members' assessment to encourage accelerated consolidation within the market. This will enable trustees to take a longer-term approach to delivering for savers by expanding the range of investments and strategies they can utilise to achieve this.

■ Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Kate Osamor:

[88919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, further to the Social Security Advisory Committee's letter of 27 May 2020 which stated that it is increasingly untenable for (employment support allowance (ESA) and job seeker's allowance (JSA)) claimants to be excluded and continue to have a lower level of income than those in receipt of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit, if she will commission research into the comparative effect of the covid-19 lockdown on people who are living on (a) £74.35 a week standard allowance for ESA, JSA and Income support and (b) £95 a week paid to those on universal credit, working tax credit and statutory sick pay.

Will Quince:

The Department has no current plans to commission such research.

Claimants on legacy benefits can make a claim for Universal Credit if they believe that they will be better off. Claimants should check their eligibility before applying to Universal Credit as legacy benefits will end when they submit their claim and they will not be able to return to them in the future. For this reason, prospective claimants are signposted to independent benefits calculators on GOV.UK.

There are special arrangements for those in receipt of the Severe Disability Premium, who will be able to make a new claim to Universal Credit from January 2021.

■ Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[91170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department is providing to people with covid-19 symptoms who are required to self-isolate and do not qualify for statutory sick pay in (a) Erith and Thamesmead constituency and (b) England.

Justin Tomlinson:

The guidance given to customers is dependent on their own personal circumstances. They will be signposted to the most relevant benefit.

■ Unemployment Benefits

Neil Coyle:

[\[90140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to reduce benefit levels for people deemed by her Department to be unfit for work.

Neil Coyle:

[\[90141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government plans to reduce benefit levels for people deemed by her Department to be fit for work.

Justin Tomlinson:

Future decisions on benefit levels will be made at the next appropriate fiscal event.

In March 2020, the Chancellor announced a series of policies to support people, jobs and businesses during the Pandemic, including an increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance for 12 months, in addition to planned uprating of 1.7%, both of which support new and existing claimants.

■ Universal Credit

Sir John Hayes:

[\[88815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps her Department has taken to ensure that new universal credit claimants are paid on time.

Will Quince:

Processing Universal Credit claims and ensuring people are paid quickly is a key priority for the Department; our latest data shows over 90% of new claimants have received their payments on time and in full.

There have been over 3 million Universal Credit claims made since mid-March and there are currently 5.6 million people on Universal Credit. Universal Credit has clearly stood up to the challenges associated with the surge in claims following the outbreak of COVID-19, demonstrating scalability and resilience are part of its design. Millions more are able to access welfare which is fairer and more generous than the legacy benefit system.

The Department will continue to closely monitor its services across the country as we double the number of work coaches in Jobcentres before the end of the financial year, to strengthen our employment support offer through our 'Plan for Jobs'.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Corporate transparency and reform of the companies register

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS459\]](#)

My Right Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility) Lord Callanan has today made the following statement:

The Government published its response to the 2019 consultation on options to enhance the role of Companies House and increase the transparency of companies and other legal entities on Friday 18 August. The consultation received over 1300 responses from all across business, academia and civil society and I am grateful to all those that took the time to submit their views.

The response outlines the Government's intention to take forward many of the measures proposed in the consultation. Our vision is for a company register built upon relevant and accurate information that supports the UK's global reputation as a leading exponent of greater corporate transparency. Companies House will play an even stronger role as an enabler of economic growth, whilst strengthening the UK's ability to combat economic crime.

These reforms will support the Government's ambition of making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business. Businesses will benefit from more reliable information, streamlined and digitised processes and an improved user experience, reflecting the needs of business in the 21st century.

The key measures are:

- Identity verification. We will introduce compulsory identity verification for all directors and beneficial owners (People with Significant Control) and individuals filing information on behalf of a company.
- Reforms to Companies House powers. We propose giving the Registrar much stronger powers to query, seek evidence for, amend or remove information and to share it with law enforcement partners when certain conditions are met.
- Protecting personal information. We will give individuals more rights to remove personal information from the register, to help protect them from fraud and other harms.
- Company accounts. We propose mandating electronic filing to bring the UK in line with international best practice and will look to simplify the filing of accounts with Companies House and HMRC. We propose a further consultation on options to deliver these reforms.

These reforms will have a negligible impact on the speed at which incorporation and other filings are completed: we still expect the vast majority of companies to be able to incorporate easily within 24 hours. Costs will remain low by international standards. Where more information is being sought from companies, for example for identity verification, technological solutions will ensure that additional burdens on business and individuals are kept to a minimum.

The Government will consult on further reforms to make Companies House data more useful and usable, including reforms to the filing of company accounts and the Registrar's powers. Once the detail of all the proposals has been settled, the Government will bring forward legislation to implement the reforms when Parliamentary time allows.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Adult Social Care Winter Plan**

Minister of State (Minister for Care) (Helen Whately):

[\[HCWS458\]](#)

I would like to update the House on the Government's comprehensive adult social care COVID-19 strategy and its publication of the Adult Social Care Winter Plan. A copy of the plan will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges in the United Kingdom and around the world.

This has resulted in an equally unprecedented, but not unexpected, response from the social care sector and its dedicated workforce of 1.5 million people, who alongside the 5.4 million plus women, men and young people who provide unpaid care, have made an invaluable contribution to the national effort and our gratitude to them all is immense.

Together, they have been working tirelessly to support people who need care, especially those who are older or already living with underlying health conditions making them more vulnerable to infection.

Alongside extensive efforts at local level, national government has provided enhanced support to the sector, working with and through local leaders. This support was set out in the Adult Social Care Action Plan and Care Home Support Plan. It included £3.7 billion of emergency grant funding to local authorities to address the pressures on local services caused by the pandemic and a £600 million Infection Control Fund to support providers to reduce the rate of transmission of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the Adult Social Care Covid-19 Support Taskforce, set up and chaired by David Pearson (social care COVID-19 Lead for the NHS and past President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services), formed part of the Government's overall commitment to the sector.

It would be wise to assume that coronavirus, in addition to anticipated service demand, will place unique pressures on the health and care system this winter. COVID-19 will be co-circulating with seasonal flu and other viruses, and transmission may well increase over the winter period.

It is therefore essential that we – national government and local partners – work closely together to make sure we are prepared for these additional pressures, particularly a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. We must have robust plans in place to respond to challenging events and protect people who need care and the workforce supporting them.

The Adult Social Care Covid-19 Support Taskforce concluded at the end of August, and their recommendations have shaped our approach to tackling COVID-19 in the adult social care sector and, in particular, the plans we have put in place for winter.

As we approach these colder months, the Government will play a key role in driving and supporting improved performance of the system, working with local authorities and CQC to strengthen their monitoring and regulation role to ensure Infection Prevention and Control procedures are taking place. The key elements of our plan for social care this winter are:

- Providing an additional £546m Infection Control Fund to support infection control measures.
- Continuing to engage with local authorities, care providers, people with care and support needs, and their families and carers to understand their needs and provide support.
- Leading and coordinating the national response to COVID-19 and providing support to local areas as set out in the Contain Framework.
- Continuing to develop and publish guidance which is relevant and accessible, and update policies and guidance in line with the latest evidence. We will work to proactively communicate vital updates to our winter plan and other guidance.
- Working relentlessly to ensure sufficient testing capacity and continuing to deliver and review the social care testing strategy in line with the latest evidence and scientific advice. We will also improve the flow of testing data to everyone who needs it.
- Providing free PPE for COVID-19 needs in line with current guidance to care home and domiciliary care providers via the PPE portal until March 2021.
- Providing free PPE (for COVID-19 needs) in line with current guidance to local resilience forums (LRFs) who wish to continue PPE distribution, and to local authorities in other areas, to distribute to social care providers ineligible for supply via the PPE portal until March 2021.
- Making the flu vaccine available for free to all health and care staff, personal assistants, and unpaid carers.
- Introducing tightened measures around visiting. We recognise that visits are important for the wellbeing of residents and loved ones, but with higher rates of Covid-19 in the community, extra precautions will be needed. We have set these out in revised guidance. Infection control is paramount and in designated 'areas of intervention' visiting will be stopped except in exceptional circumstances, such as end-of-life.

- Stopping all but essential movement of staff between care settings to stop the virus spreading. We know that the majority of care homes have already done this – now we are taking this restriction further and will enforce this through regulation.
- Working with the CQC to ensure that all places that receive people discharged from hospital are safe and have the highest levels of infection control measures in place.
- Supporting providers to ensure that staff who are isolating in line with government guidance receive their normal wages while doing so.
- Publishing the new Adult Social Care Dashboard, bringing together data from the Capacity Tracker and other sources, meaning that critical data can be viewed in real time at national, regional and local level by national and local government.
- Publishing information about effective local and regional protocols and operational procedures based on what we have learnt from so far, to support local outbreaks in the event of increased community transmission.

This doesn't diminish the need for a long-term plan for social care. Putting social care on a sustainable footing, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, is one of the biggest challenges our society faces.

There are complex questions to address, to which we want to give our full consideration in light of current circumstances.

Successive governments have failed to 'fix' social care, but this Government has been clear that this must change. Right now, the Government's number one focus for adult social care is for everyone to receive the care they need throughout this pandemic.

This crisis, awful though it has been – and continues to be – for so many people, may yet be the catalyst for a new kind of social care; services that reflect, adapt and future proof the health and wellbeing of all of us – now and for many generations to come.

TRANSPORT

■ Rail update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS460\]](#)

When the pandemic hit, we stepped in to keep train services running for key workers and essential supplies. Today we are renewing that support with new agreements, called Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements (ERMAs), to support the UK recovery and continue the fight against the pandemic.

These agreements, which run for up to 18 months, are designed to bring the rail franchising system to an end. Coming into force yesterday, they contain provisions to bring current franchises to an end when these agreements expire.

They are the first step in creating a new kind of railway. One which is customer-focused, easy to use, good value and where the trains run on time. A structure will take shape over the coming months.

These new contracts continue to respond to the impact of COVID-19 and ensure the railways continue to support the country's recovery from the pandemic, delivering for passengers, freight and taxpayers. They keep the best elements of the private sector, including competition and innovation, that drive growth but go further by delivering greater leadership, direction and accountability.

Operators have now been placed on far more demanding management agreements, with tougher performance targets, and lower management fees. Management fees will now be a maximum of 1.5% of the cost base of the franchise before the pandemic began.

Complying with current public health guidance, I have also asked operators to run almost a full capacity service, to ensure there is space to help passengers travel safely while we continue to combat the threat of Coronavirus.

The new contracts allow us to make an early start on key reforms, including requiring operators to co-ordinate better with each other and driving down the railways' excessive capital costs.

The railway will have a renewed and much sharper focus on delivering a reliable service which passengers and freight users can trust. This links to Keith Williams' root-and-branch review of the railway. These measures have his full support, and will pave the way for a White Paper on the wider future of the railway during the ERMA period.

Until passenger numbers return, significant taxpayer support will still be needed, including under the ERMA's announced today. But these arrangements pave the way for wider rail industry reform that put passenger priorities at the forefront and will enable substantial medium and longer-term savings for the tax payer. The railway will have a new and greater focus on delivering a reliable service which passengers can trust.